

Hitting the Sack with an Aching Back



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Chronic back pain is the most common reason for doctor visits, next to the common cold. Back pain may be triggered through sports, heavy lifting at work, picking up a bag of soil while gardening or even by lifting your child.

The low back supports most of the body's weight and, as a result, is susceptible to pain caused by injury or other problems. Over 80% of adults experience low back pain (LBP) sometime during their life and more than half will have a repeat episode. Low back pain may be a steady ache or a sharp, acute pain that worsens with movement. In some cases, people with back pain may experience sciatica, a "shooting" pain that travels down the leg.

Back pain relief

Luckily there is relief for many back pain sufferers. Chronic pain can often be relieved through one or a combination of the following: osteopathy, acupuncture, chiropractic or massage therapy. Regular exercise and proper stretching techniques are also a must to rehabilitating a weakened back and for strengthening the muscles to prevent further injury. For the inflammatory pain that occurs in most cases of backache, natural anti-inflammatory supplements such as turmeric can be very effective.

In addition to exercise, hands-on therapy and supplements, lifestyle changes can also help improve your backache. In fact, it may be as simple as looking at your mattress.

Sleep quality and back pain

In a recent study, a German university, the Universitat Tubingen, systematically investigated the association between back pain, sleep quality and the quality of mattress. At checkout, the researchers asked 265 consecutive guests of a hotel about the subjective quality of sleep the previous night. Of the rooms at this hotel, nine rooms had been equipped with new mattresses of three different qualities and prices; the hotel staff and the guests were not aware of the changes in mattress quality. Sleep quality was assessed on a scale between 1 (very good) and 5 (very bad) and was analyzed in comparison to the remaining eight-year old mattresses of the hotel.

The researchers found a direct correlation between the quality of the mattress and the quality of sleep. The three qualities of the mattresses correlated significantly and positively with the perceived quality of sleep. The authors concluded that for chronic sufferers from back pain and sleep problems, the association between sleep quality and quality of the mattress is significant.