

## **Mind-Body Healing for Back Pain**

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Do you suffer from chronic back pain, leg, neck or shoulder pain? A number of mind-body tools that can help you dramatically reduce your pain. This can help you take charge of discomfort that until now may have seemed out of your control, and move forward in your life with greater ease and confidence.

### ***Traditional Medicine Offers Only Limited Help:***

Traditional medicine is known to offer only limited help for chronic neuromuscular and skeletal pain. There are two predominant modes of treatment for these types of chronic pain: surgery and medication. While surgery is beneficial in some cases, it may not be a viable option. And medication, which aims either to reduce inflammation or to suppress symptoms, generally does not deal with underlying causes of pain. Medication is most useful as a short-term therapy. Over the long term, reliance on medication can result in toxic side effects that may outweigh the benefits of short-term relief.

It should therefore be welcome news that we can do far better than simply tolerate and medicate our pain. The reason lies in the *causes* of pain. Understanding those causes opens the door to developing effective techniques for pain management.

### ***The Causes of Pain***

While in some cases an injury or accident can trigger the onset of chronic pain, it is actually *lifestyle habits* that are a governing force in the development of chronic pain. These habits involve the way we live in our bodies: the way we breathe, stand, sit, lie

down, move, and hold or release tension from our bodies when under mental or emotional stress. Over months and years, improper bodily habits can foster increasing physical stress, wearing down muscles, joints and bones. That's why *changing* those habits can be the critical factor in pain reduction. Just as developing unconscious bodily habits can result in pain, so too becoming conscious of and altering those habits can alleviate and even dramatically lessen discomfort.

***Body and Mind:***

Chronic pain involving muscles, bones and joints involves both body and mind. This does not mean that pain is solely in our minds. On the contrary, it means that by enhancing awareness of our bodies--of how they function and react to situation--we can apply that awareness to changing patterns of bodily use so as to decrease discomfort and increase ease. When you are in pain, your body may be signaling to you that you are doing something that is causing you a problem. If you fail to pick up the meaning of that signal, your discomfort may become habitual. If, on the other hand, you can become more aware of your body's signals, you can learn to reverse some of the lifestyle habits that create chronic pain.

***What Lifestyle Habits Create Pain?***

There are four basic lifestyle habits that play a major role in creating pain. These habits are:

- a) Inefficient or restricted breathing;
- b) Poor alignment;
- c) Excess muscle tension; and
- d) Negative and reactive mental/emotional states.

By exploring mind-body training and movement therapy (a form of mind-body training), you can learn how to replace these dysfunctional habits with:

- a) Deep, relaxed breathing;
- b) Comfortable, easy alignment;
- c) Decreased muscle tension;
- d) Positive and proactive mental/emotional states.

As you do this, you will be replacing tension and effort in your body with greater ease and flow of movement.

***Change Your Life by Focusing on How:***

Reducing pain involves exploring and changing *how* you breathe, *how* you stand, sit, and walk, *how* you move with less muscle tension, and *how* your emotions affect your body. As you learn how to do this, you will adopt habits that feel easier, softer, more relaxed. Make a decision that your strongest interest for the immediate future is to explore how to move more easily, more fluidly. How to do this is the subject of my website, and is described in my book [Effortless Pain Relief](#) (available through [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)) and in my CDs and DVDs, available through my website [www.ingridbacci.com](http://www.ingridbacci.com).

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