

[IMAGE]

"Back" to Normal

Common sense used to dictate that a person recently suffering from low back pain should spend a few days in bed, so as not to aggravate the injury or increase the pain. But this recommendation has changed in the last decade, as studies show that when it comes to back pain, bed rest can actually increase pain and delay healing.

To compare two treatments for people suffering from back pain beginning in the previous three days, the authors of a recent study assigned patients to one of two groups for four days. One group of patients spent a minimum of 16 hours a day resting in bed and ceased activities, while the other group spent a maximum of 12 hours a day in bed and resumed normal daily activity. The patients, ages 18-65, were seen three times after the initial "treatment" phase: at day six or seven, at one month, and after three months.

Pain intensity, functional disability, and spine stiffness were similar for patients in both groups at all three appointments after treatment. However, a greater percentage of people in the "bed rest" group initially needed sick leave than people in the "normal activity" group (86% vs. 52%, respectively).

Normal activity has emerged as a better treatment option than bed rest for low back pain. Movement allows your muscles and spine to stay strong and flexible. Stay on your feet to prevent back pain and avert its progression to long-term, debilitating pain. Your chiropractor can recommend safe, effective activities to promote or regain a pain-free back.

Reference:

Rozenberg S, Delval C, Rezvani Y, et al. Bed rest or normal activity for patients with acute low back pain: A randomized controlled trial. *Spine* 2002;27(14), pp. 1487-1493.

For more information on back pain, go to <http://www.chiroweb.com/tyh/backpain.html>

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