

[IMAGE]

Try Exercise Instead of Surgery for Back Pain

While it's true that some back problems are so severe that they warrant surgical attention, the disturbing trend in medicine these days is to put patients under the knife, rather than investigate possible nonsurgical options.

Disc degeneration often necessitates a surgical procedure called "lumbar fusion," but as a new study shows, exercise combined with cognitive therapy (telling patients physical activity will not harm the back, and recommending exercise) may be just as effective - and without any of the risks associated with surgery.

In the study, patients with low back pain (LBP) lasting one year or longer, and evidence of disc degeneration on X-ray, were randomly selected to receive surgical fusion or cognitive intervention and exercise. At one-year follow-up, improvements in back pain, use of analgesics, emotional distress, life satisfaction, and return to work were essentially the same in both groups. More significantly, according to the researchers, the "success rate" after one year was 70 percent in the surgical fusion group, compared to 76 percent in the nonsurgical group!

Do you suffer from back pain? If you do, it deserves the attention of a health care professional. Your chiropractor can evaluate your condition and determine the appropriate course of care.

Reference:

Brox JI, Sorensen R, Friis A, et al. Randomized clinical trial of lumbar instrumented fusion and cognitive intervention and exercises in patients with chronic low back pain and disc degeneration. *Spine*, Sept. 1, 2003;28(17), pp1913-21.

For more information on the benefits of exercise, visit
www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/sports/exercise/index.html

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