

[IMAGE]

Low Back Pain Makes You Less Fit

It's a generally accepted theory that people who have chronic low back pain are less physically fit than people who don't have low back pain. There are several reasons for this theory. In some people, for instance, the pain may be too great to exercise; other people may be afraid that strenuous activity might lead to an injury, causing even further pain. A recent study has found that while people with chronic low back pain are indeed less physically fit than people who are pain free, the reasons for being less fit aren't as clear as you might think.

In the study, 108 people with chronic low back pain completed a series of questionnaires and performed a modified cycling test to measure heart rate and oxygen consumption. Results of the tests were then compared to a group of healthy people who were similar in age and activity levels.

Only 84 patients with low back pain were able to complete the cycling test; 86 percent who did complete the test had lower aerobic fitness levels compared to the healthy group. While the authors of the study believed their research provided evidence of a link between low back pain and reduced fitness levels, none of the "usual suspects" associated with the theory, such as fear of injury, pain and low activity levels, seemed to support the link.

If you suffer from low back pain, it doesn't necessarily mean you will become less physically fit. Talk with your doctor of chiropractic about creating an exercise program that will keep you in shape without injuring your back or causing any undue pain. For more information, visit www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/sports/exercise.

Reference:

Smeets RJEM, Wittink H, Hidding A, et al. Do patients with chronic low back pain have a lower level of aerobic fitness than healthy controls? *Spine* 2006;31(1):90-97.

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