



THE SEVEN
MISTAKES
MAKING YOUR BACK PAIN WORSE
BY NICK SCHUSTER



Hello,

If you are reading this article I am guessing you suffer from back pain.

Chances are you developed your pain a while ago, and you have never been able to completely get rid of it. It may come and go, but when it is bad it affects your sleep, stops you from thinking clearly, and can get in the way of your enjoyment of life in general.

My name is Nick Schuster. I am the owner of Scarborough Physio and Health. Over the last 15 years we have helped more than 15 000 Redcliffe locals to take back control over their pain.

In this document I am going to describe to you the 7 mistakes the average person makes when they have back pain. At the end of the document I will give you some information about how you can get some more help.



Nick Schuster - Scarborough Physio and Health

Mistake 1

Stressing about what caused your back pain

One thing we know about back pain through the latest research is that most people suffer from back pain in their lives, but only the minority of us have ever had trauma.

Trauma is something like having a fall onto our back, a severe car accident, or lifting a very very heavy weight. Most of us just develop our back pain one day, and there was not necessarily anything that caused it. Even if we had trauma when we were young this generally has not much to do with the pain you have now.

Back pain tends to hit us when we are down - when we are sick, stressed, tired, or generally vulnerable. Trying to be active when we are vulnerable is often what causes your pain. There is a high chance that a combination of these factors caused your back pain, rather than an old injury, or sleeping in a funny position.

Hint - your back pain is generally caused by overdoing it, being tired, stressed, or generally run down, rather than trauma



Mistake 2

Resting too much

What we know about back pain from research is that it will almost always get better, and you need to rest when you first injure your back but it is not good to rest for too long. When we talk about rest I don't necessarily mean lying flat on your back in bed - I mean avoiding doing the movements that you believe may have hurt your back, which could be bending, leaning forward, reaching, lifting and twisting.

Long term we need to get you back to doing those things, to make sure you make a full recovery from your back pain. How long is too long to rest? Once you feel the pain becoming less intense you should get going again. Personally I believe with most injuries you should be able to get going again doing some activity after 2 weeks.

Hint - after resting 2 weeks following your injury, get going again, carefully and gradually.

Mistake 3

Wanting X-rays and MRI's

Did you know more than half the population over 50 years old has wear and tear in their back on an X Ray or MRI scan? And this consists of not only people with back pain, but people without back pain as well! There are millions of people walking around in Australia, with no back pain, that have wear and tear on their X Rays. Modern research has found no connection between how worn out your spine is on imaging, and how much pain you have. So generally I do not recommend for my patients to get an X Ray or MRI. There is a high chance that an MRI will not change how I treat you, and there is also proof that people who get X Rays can take longer to recover from an injury.

Hint - it is unlikely an X Ray or MRI will be able to tell you where your pain is coming from, so I wouldn't bother with one



Mistake 4

Believing that your back pain means your back is damaged

There is no link between when you feel pain in your back, and the movements that make you feel this pain doing more damage or more harm to your back. Pain is a protective response, and in the early stages of your injury the pain is there to stop you pushing your body too hard. As you get better, you will generally get a bit of soreness as you get going again, but you are not injuring yourself worse when you get this pain - this is simply your body getting used to moving normally again and this is a stage you have to go through to getting back to doing the things you love in life.

Hint - hurt doesn't equal harm

Mistake 5

Being scared about your back being "worn out"

As I mentioned above, most of us have age related changes in our spines. This is a consequence of living a full and active life. If you get an x ray and it talks about "disc bulges" or "degeneration" or your GP tells you that you have arthritis, then guess what? This is completely normal for your age. One thing to remember - your back looked exactly the same before your injury. Wear and tear does not equal pain, there are plenty of people with a bit of wear and tear in their backs (me included) that manage quite fine.

Hint - wear and tear in your back is normal as you age, and has no link to pain

Mistake 6

Not knowing that stress can make you vulnerable to pain

Have you ever had a headache when you are under stress?

The headache wasn't there until the stress affected your body, then it got worse. The same can happen with back pain. When you are stressed, your brain releases chemicals and hormones that can make your pain more intense.

It really is true that stress can make your pain worse, and you are also more likely to have pain during stressful periods of your life. So often to get on top of your pain, you need to get on top of your stress.

You need to make sure you are getting enough sleep, eating the right foods and staying hydrated, and are getting outside and moving every day. This will help you manage your stress, and your pain will start to settle.

Hint - stress makes pain worse. Get on top of your stress with good sleep, good food, water, movement and being outside.



Get your body moving

Mistake 7

Not knowing that health problems make pain worse

It is proven that people with problems like being overweight, having diabetes, being unfit, and having emotional challenges like anxiety or depression can also worsen your back pain. Your body's immune system needs to be working properly to help you recover from pain, and often when you hurt your back it is all you can think about and you try lots of things to get your back better, without necessarily thinking that your health could be part of the problem. Often if you have had pain for a long time that is not getting better it makes sense to turn your energy towards getting some of these health issues under control - I would start with the health issue you feel is the biggest problem in your life and is holding you back the most.

Hint - bad health can make your pain worse. Start to help yourself by focusing on the health issue which you feel is holding you back the most.

So, thanks for reading.....

Which of these 7 mistakes do you think are the ones you are making? Chances are that you are not making all 7 of them, but I would be fairly sure that you will identify with at least 2 or 3 of them. I hope this short document gives you some hope and understanding of some of the causes of your back pain.

What should you do next?

At Scarborough Physio and Health we have helped more than 11 000 Redcliffe locals to get out of pain.

We have services including physio, massage, pilates and acupuncture, which can help you take control of your pain.

Do you want an expert second opinion as to what is actually causing your back pain?

You may have had your pain for a long time and it is not getting better, you have probably tried lots of things to help and nothing is helping, and you just want an answer and a plan to take control of your pain.

Nick Schuster can give you this through his Second Opinion Service (SOS). [Click here](#) to find out more about Nick's Second Opinion Service.