

There is a common misconception that many doctors and insurance companies have that back pain gets better by itself in a few weeks and all that needs to be done is to manage the pain until that happens. This may be true for minor injuries, but more severe injuries often heal poorly if treated this way. Poor healing results in an accumulation of weak, damaged tissue.

The same is true for spinal damage that results from repetitive minor injuries. In time weakened tissue accumulates. This weakened tissue makes it easier to re-injure the spine leading to chronic back and neck problems.

A study published in the *British Medical Journal* found that only 25% of patients seeing a medical doctor for back pain had recovered completely 12 months later. Another study published in the journal *Spine*, showed that only 27% had fully recovered in three months.

The typical treatment for back pain is the use of anti-inflammatory medications. While these can suppress the symptoms to some extent, they do not address the actual problem and they have been shown to hasten the destruction of the joints in the body by interfering with the repair process. In addition, it is reported that 16,000 people die each year due to the side effects of these medications.

It is also believed that a six week rehabilitative exercise program can improve chronic back problems. While this is true, the results are often temporary if the individual returns to a sedentary lifestyle at the end of the six weeks. Any increased muscle tone is lost over the next month or two.

Chiropractic care along with exercise has been shown to provide superior results. Chiropractic adjustments tend to promote better tissue healing. Even still, those patients who have already developed chronic spinal problems prior to seeking chiropractic care, may always have chronic problems. It is for these individuals that chiropractic maintenance care can be especially helpful. This type of care is typically one visit every two weeks and it helps prevent further degeneration of the spine. It also helps reduce the frequency and duration of flare-ups of back and neck pain.

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