



LOW BACK PAIN SELF TREATMENT

An evidenced based handout for treating low back pain



Dr. Jim Heafner PT, DPT, OCS

GUIDED PAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS IN YOUR POCKET



EXERCISE



SOFT TISSUE
MASSAGE



EDUCATION



Welcome to the Pain Free Project

Pain Management & Movement for Life

FROM THE PAIN FREE PROJECT FOUNDER

Having experienced low back pain in the past, I understand how scary it can be. The fear of my pain was primarily driven by the *uncertainty* of when it would happen, why it was occurring, and how long it would last. Unlike a paper cut or a rolled ankle, my low back pain was debilitating (at least for a few days). I worried it would not get better, and that I would not be able to return to the activities I enjoyed doing most.

Fortunately, almost all low back pain goes away. If you are experiencing pain, please remain optimistic! Do not let fear and uncertainty wear you down. The human body and brain are incredibly strong and resilient. Use the exercises, education, and soft tissue videos in this handout to help get you out of pain!

-Dr. Jim Heafner PT, DPT, OCS

A QUICK NOTE ON PAIN

Pain, while unpleasant, is an essential part of life. We now know that pain is produced 100% by the brain. Each pain experience is personalized to that individual and heavily dictated by their environment, context of a situation, and past experiences. To better understand your pain, it's important to identify the situations which help alleviate and aggravate your symptoms. This knowledge gives you power to manage your pain quickly and effectively.

LOW BACK PAIN

Statistics, Facts, and Misconceptions



Zip Code

#1 INDICATION FOR HAVING LOW BACK SURGERY

80%

YOUR CHANCE OF HAVING LOW BACK PAIN

\$50 Billion

AMOUNT AMERICANS SPEND ON BACK PAIN EACH YEAR

Disuse NOT Disease

IN GENERAL OLDER PEOPLE EXPERIENCE PAIN BECAUSE THEY STOP MOVING!



>50%

PERCENTAGE OF PAIN FREE MIDDLE AGED PEOPLE WITH DISC HERNIATIONS

1%

PERCENTAGE OF BACK PAIN THAT REQUIRES IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION



Get Strong

SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE EXISTS SUPPORTING THE USE OF EXERCISE AS A THERAPEUTIC TOOL TO IMPROVE BACK FLEXIBILITY AND STRENGTH.

HANDOUT GUIDE

- Low back pain facts and information
- Low back pain recovery timeframes and general exercise guidelines
- Specific low back exercises videos with 'how to tips.'
- Specific low back soft tissue exercises with added movement
- Where to learn more information!

Page 3
Page 4
Page 5
Page 6
Page 7

Continue to the next page to learn about low back pain causes and conservative treatment options.



LOW BACK PAIN SELF TREATMENT HANDOUT

EXERCISES, SOFT TISSUE SELF MASSAGE, AND EDUCATION



FIRST, LEARN ABOUT LOW BACK PAIN

- General facts and stats
- Common causes
- Common treatment options
- Additional considerations

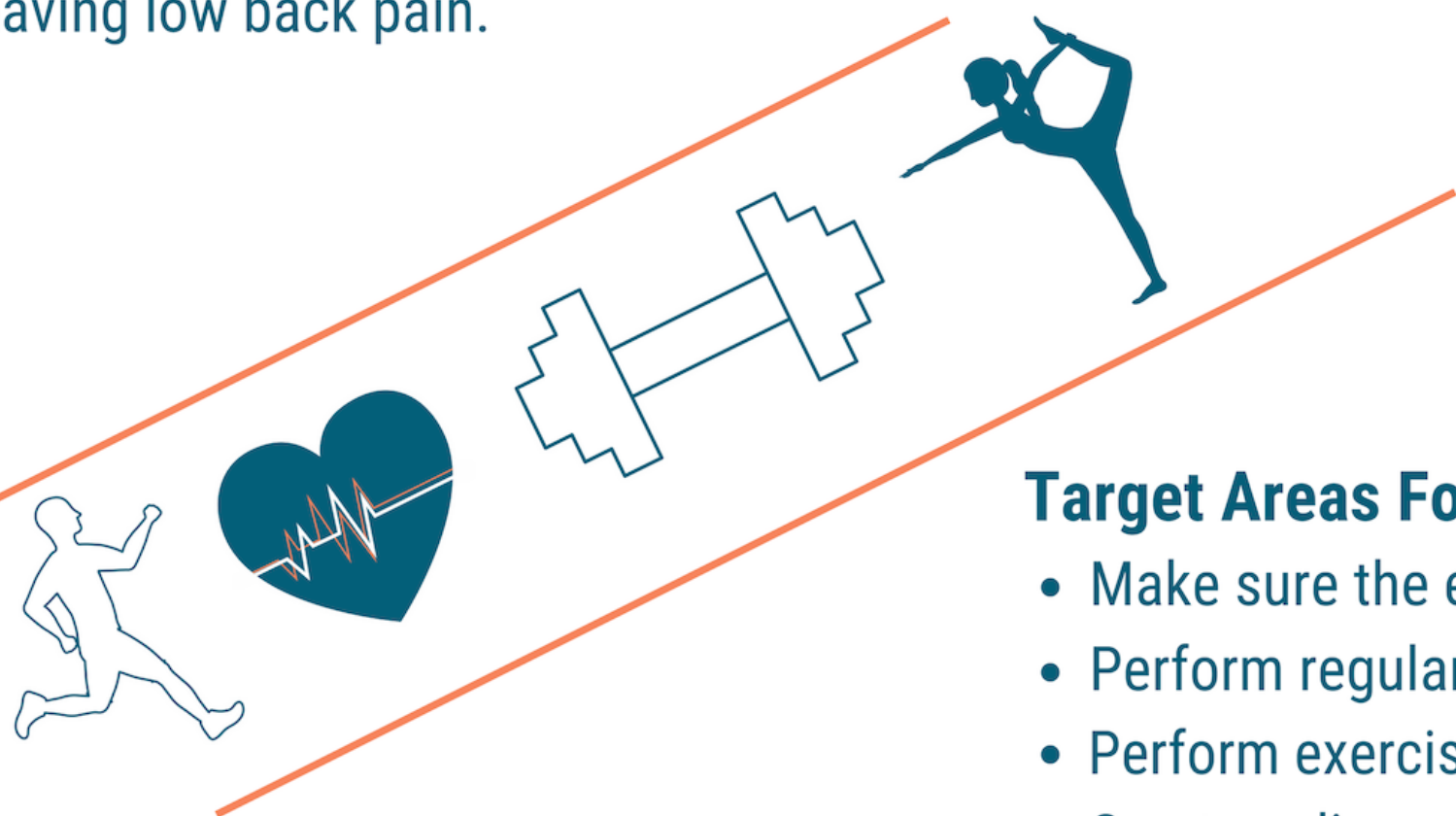
LOW BACK PAIN

- If you are experiencing lower back pain, you are not alone! In fact, nearly **80%** of people experience low back pain at some point.
- Interestingly, MRI studies have found many people *without pain or low back problems* to have degenerative changes. This means that arthritis is often **NOT** the cause of a person's pain. It is only a symptom!
- Movement, modifying your activity, and understanding your pain are the **KEYS** to decreasing your low back pain.



Why does Low Back Pain Commonly Occur?

Studies have shown that poor hip strength, decreased motion in the middle back, and decreased motion in the hips are all risk factors for having low back pain.



Target Areas For Long Term Health and Prevention

- Make sure the entire spine receives regular, healthy movement.
- Perform regular hip mobility or flexibility exercises.
- Perform exercises that strengthen the hips and spine (ex. squats).
- Create a diverse workout routine that incorporates strength training, cardiovascular exercise, and flexibility training.
- Do not forget the power of a managing stress and other environmental factors!

Continue to the next page to learn about low back pain recovery time and general symptom guidelines.





PAIN AND MOVEMENT EDUCATION

The content below discusses low back pain timeframes for recovery, common symptom guidelines to follow, and general information to consider after a low back injury. Follow this advice to optimize your recovery!

General Recovery Time after a Low Back Injury

- Most people recover from a low back injury in 4-6 weeks (50% recover in ~2 weeks, 80% recover in ~6 weeks).
- Intense pains should resolve within a few days. Moderate to mild symptoms may persist for a few weeks.
- The severity of the injury, level of stress, fear of movement, and other factors will all impact recovery time.

Symptom Guidelines

- If your symptoms travel into your hip or thigh regions, **stop and change** your activity. As a general rule, symptoms should not travel away from your spine.
- Exercises may cause soreness, but should make you feel better overall. *They should not cause more pain!*
- Temporarily avoid postures and positions that increase pain. Gradually get back to these positions over time.

Low Back Pain Information

The following pieces of advice should be considered after a low back injury

- Pain is rarely caused by a more serious medical issue (such as a fracture or cancer), that would require urgent medical attention. Weakness and pain in the legs, OR loss of bowel/bladder function warrants medical attention.
- If you are experiencing low back pain that is *not* improving within 6 weeks, you should see a medical provider.
- In most low back pain cases, X-rays and MRIs are *not* indicated as they often do not correlate with pain.
- >70% of back injuries are due to sprains and strains, which respond well to rest, easy exercise, and education.

(The above information is from our Low Back Pain Return to Activity Guidelines PDF in the Fix Your Low Back Pain Program! See page 7 to learn more.)



Stay in Touch! Follow The Pain Free Project

- **Website:** [painfreeproject.com](https://www.painfreeproject.com)
- **Youtube:** https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUKFG_U4x-JMhaKVpTlcDhA
- **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/heafnerhealth/>

Continue to the next page to see exercises and soft tissue self-massage videos to help reduce your back pain!



LOW BACK PAIN SELF TREATMENT HANDOUT

SOFT TISSUE MOVEMENTS



Soft Tissue Videos

**Foam roller & tennis/lacrosse ball is needed for the videos in this section*

- In this section, you will see 3 soft tissue self massage videos
- Each video has instructions regarding where to put the soft tissue equipment, how to perform the movement, and the number of sets/ reps
- The purpose of these movements is to decrease your pain prior to moving into your exercises

EXERCISE 1: FOAM ROLLER OUTER HIP MOBILITY

DOSAGE: 2 REPS X 1 MIN



Focus Points

- Find an area of tension along the outer hip
- Roll your body back and forth over the tension point
- Add middle back rotation as tolerated



Youtube Video

- <https://youtu.be/b6xNKmToWKU>



EXERCISE 2: LOW BACK MUSCLE SOFT TISSUE MOBILITY

DOSAGE: 2 REPS X 1 MIN



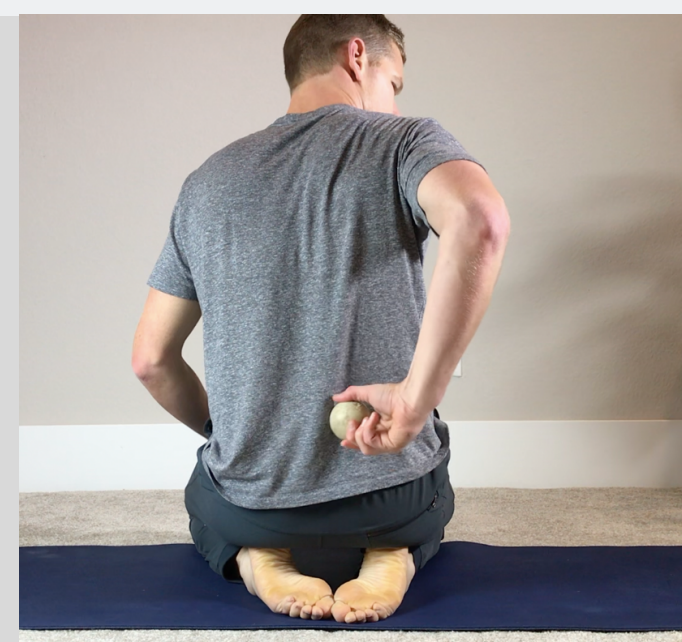
Focus Points

- Find an area of tension in the low back muscles
- Lie on your back over the ball
- Add small hip/pelvis tucks as tolerated



Youtube Video

- <https://youtu.be/jjTW7TI40TI>



BONUS SOFT TISSUE: FOAM ROLLER MIDDLE BACK MOBILITY

DOSAGE: 2 REPS X 1 MIN



Focus Points

- Find an area of tension in the middle back
- Arch over the foam roller while keeping your core engaged
- Use your hands to support your neck



Youtube Video

- <https://youtu.be/GnUCdUP9VIs>



GENERAL RULE TO FOLLOW

If a movement increases pain or symptoms, **STOP** and modify that activity

LOW BACK PAIN SELF TREATMENT HANDOUT

EXERCISE VIDEOS



Exercise Videos

- In this section, you will see 3 exercise videos.
- Each video has instructions regarding how to perform the exercise, common misalignments, and how many repetitions.
- The purpose of these exercises is to decrease your pain through gradual movement. You should not feel more pain following the exercises.

EXERCISE 1: HAND HEEL ROCKS

DOSAGE: 2 SETS X 15 REPS



Focus Points

- Maintain a neutral spine
- Widen your hips back into the movement
- Do not round your low back as you lower into the movement



Youtube Video

- <https://youtu.be/HfQ-PxIEBlw>



EXERCISE 2: HIP INTERNAL ROTATIONS

DOSAGE: 2 SETS X 15 REPS



Focus Points

- The top leg acts as a lever to drop further into the motion
- Engage the lower abdominals as you return to the start
- You should feel a stretch in the upper/outer hip



Youtube Video

- <https://youtu.be/xq-bY97Kjds>



BONUS EXERCISE: QUADRUPED HIP EXTENSIONS

DOSAGE: 2 SETS X 15 REPS



Focus Points

- Start in an all 4's position
- Slowly kick one leg back with your core muscles engaged
- Do not overarch your back while raising your leg



Youtube Video

- <https://youtu.be/4KSFTggueEc>



GENERAL RULE TO FOLLOW

If a movement increases pain or symptoms, **STOP** and modify that activity

THANK YOU FOR FOLLOWING THE PAIN FREE PROJECT!

I hope you found the information, exercises, and soft tissue videos in this handout applicable to your own aches and pains. If you are interested in learning more, please check out the entire **Fix Your Low Back Pain' program**, a 4-week program, that delves into evidenced-based strategies to eliminate low back pain!

Program Link: <https://painfreeproject.teachable.com/p/fix-your-low-back-pain>



FIX YOUR LOW BACK PAIN

Presented by Dr. Jim Heafner PT, DPT, OCS

THE PAIN FREE PROJECT



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION



Who can benefit from this program?

- People who are currently suffering from low back pain
- People interested in learning about back pain, movement, and pain neuroscience
- Anyone with a history of low back pain looking to stay strong and healthy
- Anyone who cannot perform the activities they love because of low back pain and are ready to take ownership over their pain



What does the program include?

- 4 guided sessions
- 16 low back specific exercises
- 16 low back specific soft-tissue (self massage) videos
- Low back pain and movement video tutorials
- Specific return to activity guidelines
- Printable Exercise PDFs



Why go through the low back pain program?

- All exercises and education include the newest research on low back pain
- The program is led by a licensed Doctor of Physical Therapy and Orthopedic Specialist
- The program is structured after the 1,000s of patients I have treated with low back pain. I try to anticipate the questions you have to give you the most personalized experience!

Disclaimer

All content found on The Pain Free Project Website, including: text, images, audio, or other formats were created for informational purposes only. The content and advice is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read on this website or in this program.

The advice and information contained on this website may not be appropriate for all individuals. Therefore, the author, employees, company, affiliates, or any other parties involved in the creation or promotion of our products are not responsible for any injuries or health conditions that may result from advice, opinions, and programs represented in this website or any of our training programs or other products. The information on this website and in the training program are the opinions of the author and are not a replacement for medical advice. You should consult a physician before starting any pain management, self massage, or exercise program.

We claim no responsibility for any injuries you might sustain. Exercises include tutorials and detailed descriptions to give you the information you need to be able to perform the exercise with proper form. However, it is your responsibility to warm up properly, determine the weight you will use, perform each movement correctly, and ultimately to decide whether or not you are capable of performing the exercise/workout without sustaining injury. We accept no responsibility for and exclude all liability in connection with browsing this Web site, use of information or downloading any materials from it, including but not limited to any liability for errors, inaccuracies, omissions, or misleading or defamatory statements. The information at this Web site might include opinions or views which, unless expressly stated otherwise, are not necessarily those of ours or any associated company or any person in relation to whom they would have any liability or responsibility. If you choose to follow advice given on this website or transmitted through the web, you are doing so at your own risk.

If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor, go to the emergency department, or call 911 immediately. The Pain Free Project does not recommend or endorse any specific tests, physicians, products, procedures, opinions, or other information that may be mentioned on The Pain Free Project. Reliance on any information provided by The Pain Free Project, The Pain Free Project affiliates or employees, contracted writers, or medical professionals presenting content for publication to The Pain Free Project is solely at your own risk.

The Site may contain health- or medical-related materials or discussions regarding explicit diagnosis, pathologies, and musculoskeletal disease states. If you find these materials offensive, you may not want to use our Site. The Site and its Content are provided on an "as is" basis. The Pain Free Project is not responsible for the claims of external websites and education companies. All content and information is subject to changes or updates without notice. For the latest information, changes, or updates, please check back frequently.