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# TALKING BACK

THE NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO HEALTHY BACKS

## Summer's Back!

Dust off those running shoes, get the bicycle out of the basement and remember where you put the tennis racket. Summer's almost here and for a lot of us, that means getting physical for the first time since last fall.

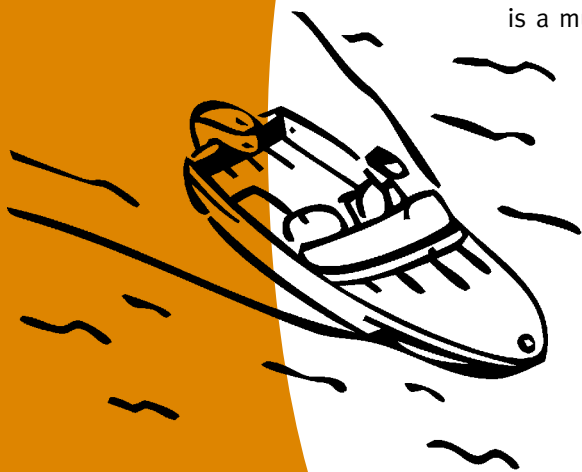
Whether you're an aspiring athlete, a serious nature lover, or someone who just enjoys fun in the sun, you need to get your muscles and joints ready for summer. Strapping on the water skis or setting off for a 10-K ride on your bike can lead to some serious aches and strains if you're not in good shape. Read on for some pointers to help ensure your summer is pain and injury free.

# SO LET'S GET BUSY!

✓ **Take it slow.** You'll have to work up to that Wimbledon-style tennis match, or the Olympic gold medal for beach volleyball. Now's the time to begin some regular exercise to ease into your favourite summer sports. Try some easy jogging, swimming, and daily stretching to start. Always stretch before and after each activity. Ask your chiropractor about a regular routine of exercise that's best for you.

✓ **Use the right equipment.** Adults and children should always wear helmets for biking, and lifejackets for boating and water sports. Sun protection – a hat, T-shirt and sunscreen – is a must. So is good footwear. The right shoes will give you balance, support, and protection. Your chiropractor can check to see if you need orthotics to correct the position of your feet and help prevent knee, hip, and back problems.

✓ **Eat well.** Make healthy eating part of your daily routine. Include at least eight glasses of water a day (beer and coffee don't count!). When you're active, make sure you have lots of water or sports drinks to replenish your body's fluids, especially in hot weather. Your chiropractor can help you learn more about how to eat right.



# Dear Doctor

## ASK A CHIROPRACTOR

**Dear Doctor:** My husband and I love to travel in the summer, but I find that spending a few hours in the car or on a plane really gets to my back. Is there something I can do to make our trips more comfortable?

**Dear Patient:** Sitting for hours in a car, plane, bus, or train can be tough on your muscles and joints. Tension builds up and can leave you feeling stiff and sore. While you're on vacation, make sure your back has a good time too. These are some ways to prevent and relieve the physical stress of travelling:



### On the road

Try to stop every hour or so, get out of the car and have a good stretch. Raise your arms above your head and stretch them upwards. Hug yourself and rotate first to the left, then to the right. Clasp your hands behind your back and bend to one side, then the other. Rotate your ankles, bend your knees, and take a little walk.

Sounds like a lot of wasted time on the road, right? Wrong! Stretching is good for your circulation, and keeps your muscles and joints from getting cramped and sore. A few stretch stops along the way can leave your back feeling much more comfortable at the end of the day.

If you can't take a break, you can still stretch as you go. Tighten your calf muscles, hold for a count of three, and release. Do the same with your thigh muscles, then your gluteal muscles (the ones you're sitting on). Try to keep tension in your upper body from building up. Roll your shoulders backwards and forwards a few times. If you're the driver, try to keep a loose grip on the steering wheel — holding it too tightly will cause your hands, wrists, and arms to feel tired.

### In the air

Travelling by airplane often involves long periods of standing and sitting. Both can cause your back to get stiff and sore, especially if you're carrying bags or small children.

Don't forget to stretch, or take a walk while you're waiting around the airport. On the plane, get out of your seat every now and again. It's not easy to find the room to really stretch, but just standing up and walking in the aisle can do a world of good. While sitting, stay relaxed by tensing and releasing the muscles in your legs and buttocks, rolling your shoulders backwards and forwards, and wiggling your fingers and toes.

Many planes have seats that are shaped to fit the natural curve of your back, but you can give it some extra support by placing a small cushion or folded blanket between the seat and the "small" of your back, just above your waistline. Often the airline will have these on hand. If your section of the plane offers an adjustable footrest, use it to keep one foot slightly raised.

Try to avoid carrying bags that are too heavy. If you can, use a suitcase that comes with wheels and a pull strap or handle. Use a luggage cart in the airport. Save your back some trouble by checking any bags that are too heavy to lift easily into the overhead bin. When you are putting luggage up above, stand out into the aisle so you don't have to twist your back to get the bag over your head and into the compartment. Always bend your knees when you pick up a heavy suitcase or backpack.



# Ah, The Great Outdoors

Did you ever notice that canoes don't come with backrests? Or ergonomically designed seats? What about sleeping bags – where's that lumbar support?

Well, it may not be the most comfortable way to travel, but for many people, camping and canoeing are what summer is all about. For those of you who love the great outdoors, follow these tips to help prevent back pain and injury:

- Check out an outdoor supply store for equipment that can make the trip easier on your back. Ask about fold-up chairs with back supports, pads to cushion your sleeping bag, and backpacks that provide good support.
- Once a pack is full, it's quite a load on your back and shoulders. Make sure the weight of your backpack is evenly distributed. Pack any hard, bumpy or odd-shaped items on the outside, so they don't dig into your back. Use a pack with wide, padded straps, and adjust them so the pack sits tight against your back. This will reduce strain on your back, shoulders, and neck.
- Always bend your knees to lift packs and other equipment. When taking a canoe off the car, bend your knees as you lower it to the ground. When lifting the canoe, make sure your feet are firmly planted, bend your knees, and try to keep your spine from twisting as you raise it over your head and slide it onto the roof.
- When you're hiking or canoeing, stop and stretch at least every hour to prevent stiff, sore muscles and joints the next day.

## 10 TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR BACK HEALTHY.

- 1 Exercise regularly.
- 2 Follow a healthy diet.
- 3 Maintain good posture.
- 4 Stretch your spine before and after sports.
- 5 Don't overload your backpack or shoulder bag.
- 6 Stretch your legs and back after each hour of sitting.
- 7 Never cradle the phone between your neck and shoulder.
- 8 Sleep on your back or side, not on your stomach.
- 9 Invest in a good chair, pillow and mattress. It's worth it!
- 10 Have regular spinal check-ups.

## Have fun, but watch your back!

**Activities that jolt your spine can cause pain and injury to your back. These include waterskiing, jet skiing, cross-country biking, dirt biking, and horseback riding.**

**Enjoy yourself, but take it easy. Always wear the right protective equipment. And check with your chiropractor to see if these activities are right for you.**

Book a chiropractic check-up to make sure your back is in the best possible shape for a fun, active summer.

## Who says golf isn't a good workout?

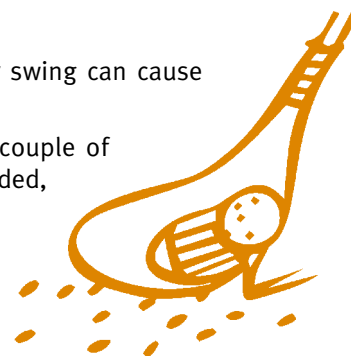
Think about it: First you bend down to tee up your ball. Next you take a few practice swings, line up the ball, and give it your best shot. Pick up your golf bag, sling it over your shoulder, and walk down the fairway. Repeat several times until you get on the green, where you bend down again, mark your ball, and then hunch over your putter. Sink your putt, and bend down again to get your ball out of the cup. Phew...only 17 more holes and a few more miles to go.

All that twisting and bending can cause a great deal of strain on your back. It's not surprising that professional golfers (like Tiger Woods) are turning to chiropractic to help keep their backs in top shape.

Here are some tips to prevent back, shoulder, and neck pain from interfering with your game:

- **Always warm up.** A few stretches and a brisk walk can help loosen your muscles and prevent injury.
- **Use the right equipment.** Clubs that are too short or too long can cause problems for your back.
- **Wear soft spikes on your shoes.** They're easier on the course, and provide cushioning for your back.
- **Use a pull cart** rather than carrying your clubs.
- **Take a lesson on proper swing technique.** A poor swing can cause long term damage to your back.
- **Swing the other way.** After every few holes, take a couple of practice swings the "wrong" way. If you shoot right-handed, take left-handed swings and vice versa.

Whether you're a pro, or just wish you were, taking good care of your back can help improve your score, and ensure a long enjoyable season on the links.



**IF YOU HAVE BACK PAIN THAT PERSISTS AFTER GOLFING, SEE A CHIROPRACTOR.**



Toll free: 1-877-DC's-CARE (327-2273)  
[www.chiropractic.on.ca](http://www.chiropractic.on.ca)

**TREATMENT THAT STANDS UP.**