



TOP 3 SIGNS YOUR BACK STIFFNESS IS A PROBLEM

By Dr. Stacey Raybuck Schatz

The Top 3 Signs Your Low Back Stiffness is a Problem

By Dr. Stacey Raybuck Schatz

You wake up and your back is stiff. You get up from work after a long day and your back is stiff. You drive for a long time and must get out of the car and stretch before you can begin moving. These are common signs and complaints of people who commonly suffer with low back pain but are commonly ignored and become something worse.

Do not ignore the signs!

If you have ever had stiffness in your low back or soreness in your low back, ***then you have to read this!*** If you have not had any low back soreness or stiffness and have never gotten up or woken up with any stiffness, then this article is not for you.

But if you have had an even one experience of stiffness or soreness then you are going to want to read on and see how you avoid costly injections, medications and problems that arise from 'soreness'.

1. You can remember the last time you have had low back stiffness or soreness.

There is no doubt that when you travel and wind up sleeping in a new bed or take a trip and wind up driving for 12 hours straight that there is going to be some soreness in your back. These cases are bound to happen.

Does this mean that you are at risk for serious problems in the future? No. These are isolated incidents of back pain that occur. You may experience these once a year, not remembering the prior incident of stiffness or soreness.

You would not remember low back stiffness or soreness if it happens only once a year.

This doesn't describe most people. Most people remember the last time they felt sore. Whether it was yesterday when you were in a long meeting and today you are in another one and now you feel it again. That is not normal. That is a problem.

There was a patient that I had come in, a mom, she was in terrible low back pain and spasms and had taken just enough medication to get her off the couch and into my office. She was in tears, she couldn't lift her children anymore. She couldn't go to work because she was in agony. As I began going over her history with her, I asked her if she had ever had any low back pain before. "No." She said. And this is a common response of back pain patients. But as I dug further, it turns out she had had previous issues of back 'stiffness'. She would get sore every once in a while but only after a day of lifting her kids or sitting for a long time in a meeting.

Do not make excuses for your pain/stiffness/soreness.

You should not have stiffness or soreness every day or once a week or once a month. You will always find a reason to 'excuse' it or think it's normal. The increase in frequency of back pain is a big sign of a problem going on. And while most people do not remember how it got to the point of hurting every day, there was an evolution where it started and it was not hurting every day but has slowly began hurting more and more frequently.

If you are experiencing back soreness and you can pin point the last time you had back soreness, this is

the sign of a problem. While you can ignore it, it will not go away. The longer you ignore it, while it saves you time and money now. Down the road it costs significantly more time and money.

2. You have had numbness or tingling down your leg, with any episode, ever.

Numbness and tingling in your feet and/or hands is never to be ignored. Numbness and tingling is not to be ignored ever.

Yes, is there times you fall asleep on your hand and it falls asleep, absolutely and you shake it off and it goes away. That is not a problem.

A problem is numbness and tingling. Period. If you didn't fall asleep in a weird position and couldn't shake your hand or leg and have the pain go away quickly then that is not normal and is a sign of a large problem.

Numbness and tingling is usually a sign of nerve involvement. Nerve involvement should not be ignored or dismissed. Nerve involvement can affect the way muscles function and lead to loss of ability to do things like walk normally or type.

There was a human resource patient that came in dragging their foot. I asked if they knew what had happened. They had no idea. One day, they couldn't walk normally. Their foot would drag. No matter what they did, they couldn't pick their foot up when they walked. As we began to dive into their past, I asked them if they had ever had numbness and tingling. A light bulb went off. They said yes they would sit at their desk and their feet would go numb. But with being busy at work and home and the fact that it would eventually go away, they just ignored it. But they can't ignore it anymore.

3. You are taking over the counter medication (like Advil or Aleve) on a regular basis or for more than 2 weeks at a time.

"Nothing Advil can't fix." If I had a nickel for every time I have heard that. Advil/Aleve, they are great for that once every few years inflammation that comes up and you need it to go away. Or that pain that you get after you sprained an ankle or had a fall. Absolutely, there is no doubt, take a few Advil and things should go right away.

But taking Advil/Aleve for more than 2 weeks straight can cause worse problems to happen, like the lining in your stomach to begin to be eaten away. And that is something you can't get back.

And yes, I know everyone knows someone who has taken Advil or Aleve for years and has never had any side effects. It's not a gamble you should take. The risks far outweigh the rewards.

Taking Advil/Aleve for more than 2 weeks at a time also causes for compensation to occur. Your body starts to protect itself from itself. In doing so, it causes more problems.

And while the Advil or Aleve might 'take the edge off' it certainly is not solving anything and is making things worse.

The time and money you save now by taking Advil/Aleve will cost you a minimum of \$5,000 more and no less than 100 hours of time down the road. And it is not a matter of will it happen, it is just a matter of when it will happen.

Back pain cannot be managed by Advil/Aleve. And it was not designed to be. Back pain that requires regular medication, even over the counter medication is back pain that needs to be dealt with. That needs to be handled.

Back pain, or any pain, that goes on for longer than two weeks is not something that should be ignored.

So, what should you do?

The first step is to find the source of your back soreness/stiffness/pain. Knowing the exact cause will allow you to be able to begin to treat what is going on.

Normally getting to the source of your back pain could cost you \$500 or more and at least 4 hours of your time seeing professionals and being evaluated.

But because we understand that time and money is valuable – we offer free monthly workshops that will go through the causes of back pain/soreness and things you can do to figure out what is causing it and how to treat it.

This is a no risk, no cost opportunity to figure out the source of your back pain/stiffness/soreness.

Just call **508-528-6100** for the next date or register online at <http://propt.ptworkshops.com/workshop>.

Every day you wait you can add an extra \$100 and 5 hours of time that you will need in the future to be able to address this. You need to begin finding the source of your problem today!
So what are you waiting for?? Sign up for the next workshop now!

P.S. If you are in too much pain to wait until the next workshop, call the office at **508-528-6100** and let the receptionist know. They will try to get you in quickly for a free screening exam. Tell them I said so!