

TOM PFEIFFER FITNESS

BACK PAIN RELIEF GUIDE

Immediate strategies to eliminate chronic back pain

- Why mainstream treatment keeps you stuck
- How to find immediate relief
- The exact steps to become pain-free for life

Tom Pfeiffer · tompfeiffer.com

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This guide is for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Consult your physician before beginning any new exercise program. Intended for people who have already seen a doctor but continue to experience chronic pain.

INTRODUCTION

Before You Begin

When to See a Doctor

This guide is for people who have already seen a doctor and are still in pain. However, some situations require immediate medical attention.

- ! A recent traumatic fall or accident
- ! Very intense pain that does not change with position
- ! Loss of bladder or bowel control
- ! Fever or unexplained weight loss
- ! Pain radiating down the leg with numbness or tingling

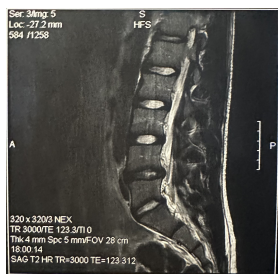
My Story

If you have back pain and are unsure of the cause, I know exactly how you feel because I lived it. In 3rd grade I could not sit still because my back hurt so much. By 16 an MRI showed spinal stenosis, a bulging disc, and scoliosis. At 21, X-rays added degenerative disc disease.

Doctors told me to stop lifting heavy, running, or anything that loaded my spine. I followed their advice. The pain never went away. Nobody asked how I sat, stood, walked, breathed, or moved. They treated symptoms, not causes.

Sound familiar?

I got fed up. I studied anatomy, read every back pain book I could find, earned over a dozen certifications, and tested everything on myself. The result: completely pain-free. I now sprint, lift heavy, train Muay Thai, and move without any of the old limitations.



Spine MRI: spinal stenosis and bulging disc



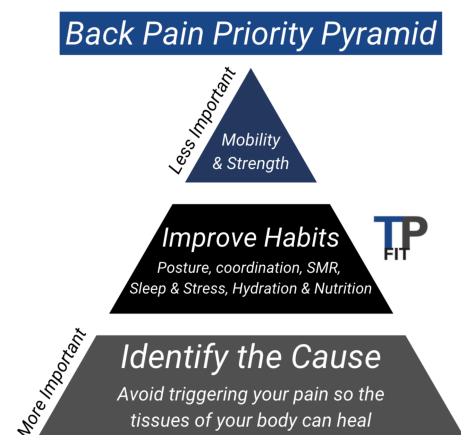
Spine X-ray: degenerative disc disease

INTRODUCTION (CONTINUED)

Why Common Treatments Keep You Stuck

Every treatment below addresses the symptom. None of them identify the cause. Until you find and remove the cause, nothing sticks.

TREATMENT	THE TRUTH
Structural Diagnosis	Pictures are not linked to pain. <u>Over 50% of people in their 30s have degenerative discs without symptoms.</u> A disc bulge may be an old healed scar. Chasing a scan finding instead of a movement cause leads to unnecessary fear and unnecessary surgery.
Rest and Ice	<u>Research shows ice delays muscle repair.</u> Pain-free movement, walking, sauna, and heat are better. Blood flow heals tissue, ice cuts it off, so move again as soon as you can without spiking pain.
Pain Medication	Medication does not address the cause. Steroid injections carry a risk of permanent neurologic damage. Temporary relief can trick you into repeating the exact habit that caused the pain in the first place.
Surgery	<u>Most back surgery performs no better than placebo.</u> Always exhaust conservative options first. Surgery is not reversible, so once conservative options are exhausted it becomes one option among several, not the first move.
Massage	<u>Passive treatment without active change produces passive results.</u> Without lifestyle changes, pain returns. Massage can lower pain for a day, but it cannot fix the sitting, standing, or lifting pattern that caused it.
Chiropractic	<u>Useful short-term, not as a long-term strategy.</u> Be wary of anyone recommending multiple adjustments per week without teaching you to improve on your own. Needing an adjustment to feel normal is a sign of dependency, not treatment.
Physical Therapy	Good PT asks about your life, not just your injury. Most PT stops at symptom relief with no plan for strength or performance. Progressive, whole body loading builds more resilience than rest and isolated exercises.
Yoga	<u>Overstretching is as risky as being tight.</u> Many chronic back pain patients have hypermobile lumbar spines. Stretching the low back can worsen symptoms. Build control in the new range instead of just chasing more flexibility.



LEVEL 1 Most Important Identify and Eliminate the Cause

Stop the habits triggering your pain. Nothing else works until you do this.

LEVEL 2 Improve Daily Habits

Posture, footwear, how you sit, stand, walk, breathe, sleep, eat, and manage stress. These run 24 hours a day.

LEVEL 3 Least Important Mobility and Strength

Once pain is reduced and habits are improving, progressive training rebuilds resilience.

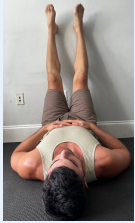
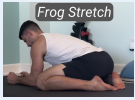
STEP 1

Pain Free Protocol

Any time your back pain flares up, run through these two steps. Build this protocol now so it is automatic when you need it.

Step 1A: Find a Pain-Free Posture

Get on the floor. Find a position that reduces pain and stay there for 10 minutes with deep, slow breathing. Do not sit on a soft couch. Inhale through the nose, long exhale out.

PHOTO	POSTURE	HOW TO DO IT	BEST FOR
	Legs up the wall	On back, legs up wall or chair. Hamstrings relaxed.	Most back pain. Default position.
	Lie on stomach	Hips into floor. Up on elbows if comfortable. Pillow under hips if needed.	Flexion-intolerant pain. Most feel relief here.
	Side-lying	Roll onto side on floor. Support head with hand. Try both sides.	Lateral back, hip, shoulder pain.
	Child's pose	Kneel, reach arms forward. Breathe into lower back.	Extension-intolerant pain. Tight lower back.
	Frog stretch	On hands and knees, slide knees wide. Sink hips back.	Tight inner thighs, hip decompression.
	Pigeon stretch	Front leg bent 90 degrees, back leg extended.	Outer hip, piriformis, glute pain.

Video: youtu.be/kmzI9A9idi8

Step 1B: Breathe and Calm Your Nervous System

Pain amplifies stress and stress amplifies pain. These techniques shift the nervous system to rest-and-recover.

TECHNIQUE	HOW TO DO IT
Slow Down	Inhale, long exhale, pause. 6 to 10 sec per breath. Longer exhale = calmer nervous system.
Sigh	Inhale twice as big as normal, then sigh out fully. Fastest way to reduce acute stress.
Hum	Hum on the exhale for 1 to 2 minutes. Calms the vagus nerve. Do while in your pain-free posture.
Yawn	Fake a yawn until a real one happens. Make it full body. Releases tension and stored stress.

Guided breathing: youtu.be/RgDAkP7kp0w · youtu.be/ubxIF6SopgA

STEP 2

Chronic Pain Review

Getting out of pain is step one. Staying out requires finding and removing the root cause. Think of your pain like a scab. Every time you repeat the habit that caused it, you pick the scab. Over 90% of clients already know the cause when they stop and think about it.

Answer these questions to find your cause:

- 🕒 When is your pain worse, and when is it better? Note the postures, activities, and time of day for both.
- 🕒 What have you already tried, and what actually helped, even a little?
- 🕒 The worksheet also includes quick tests for flexion, extension, load, and sciatica so you know exactly what to avoid.

Open the full Chronic Pain Review worksheet: [Click here to open](#)

The 8 Most Common Root Causes

ROOT CAUSE	WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT
1. Insufficient Movement	Most people sit 8+ hours a day. Glutes shut off, hip flexors pull the spine forward. Aim for 6,000 steps per day. Stand and move for 30 seconds every 20 to 30 minutes.
2. Poor Breathing	Shallow chest breathing keeps the nervous system in fight-or-flight and amplifies pain. Diaphragmatic nasal breathing is both treatment and daily practice.
3. Poor Posture	An unstable base loads the spine all day. No exercise program outworks 10 hours of bad posture. Hips above knees, spine tall, feet flat.
4. Poor Coordination and Movement	Standard bilateral gym exercises reinforce imbalances. Single-side functional training builds real-world strength and corrects asymmetries.
5. Trigger Points	Muscle knots that refer pain to other areas. Stretching the area that hurts rarely helps. Foam rolling and self-myofascial release are more effective.
6. Muscle and Joint Imbalance	One side working harder than the other. Chronic pain almost always has an asymmetry underneath it.
7. Poor Hydration and Nutrition	Dehydrated discs cannot absorb shock. Inflammatory foods keep tissue in a state it cannot heal from. Prioritize water, protein, and anti-inflammatory foods.
8. Stress and Sleep	Cortisol increases inflammation and pain sensitivity. Poor sleep prevents tissue repair. These two are almost always present in long-term chronic pain cases.

The only person who can fix your pain long term is you. This list gives you the power to take action.

STEP 3

Build a Resilient Body

Once you have stopped triggering the pain and identified the root cause, the next step is a full body assessment to understand exactly where your body needs work. Everyone is different. The assessment tells you where to focus so you are not guessing.

Full Body Assessment

The assessment looks at how your body moves, where it compensates, and what is driving your pain. It covers posture, breathing mechanics, foot strike and walking pattern, single-leg stability, left-to-right imbalances, and range of motion. From there, a training plan is built around your specific weak links, not a generic program.

Open the full Body Assessment worksheet: [Click here to open](#)

What You Will Train and Improve

AREA	WHAT GETS BETTER
Mobility	Restore full range of motion in the hips, thoracic spine, ankles, and shoulders through daily targeted mobility work.
Trigger Points	Release muscle knots causing referred pain using foam rolling, ground sitting, and self-myofascial release.
Strength and Coordination	Build real-world strength through single-side functional movement patterns that connect the whole body through fascia.
Posture and Daily Habits	Correct how you sit, stand, walk, and breathe throughout the day. These habits run 24 hours a day and have more impact than any workout.
Imbalances	Identify and correct asymmetries between left and right sides that are loading the spine and joints unevenly.
Hydration and Nutrition	Support tissue repair and reduce inflammation through proper hydration, protein intake, and anti-inflammatory foods.
Stress and Sleep	Add physical discharge through movement, breathwork, and sprinting. Prioritize sleep as the primary tissue repair window.

You do not just get out of pain. You get stronger, move better, and build a body that performs.

NEXT STEPS

Ready to End the Pain for Good?

This guide gives you the framework. But a framework is only as effective as the person applying it. If you have been dealing with chronic back pain for months or years, trying to figure this out alone is what has kept you stuck.

Pain to Power coaching is a fully custom program built around your specific pain history, your body, your goals, and your schedule. Not a generic plan. Not a template. A system designed for you from the first conversation.

What you get with Pain to Power coaching:

- ✓ A full body assessment to identify the exact root causes driving your pain
- ✓ A custom training plan that gets you out of pain and builds real performance from day one
- ✓ Expert eyes on every rep so your technique is never the thing holding you back
- ✓ Weekly check-ins and progressive programming that adapts as you improve
- ✓ Direct access to Tom throughout the entire process
- ✓ A permanent solution, not temporary relief

My clients do not just get out of pain. They sprint, lift heavy, move athletically, and look better than they did before they were injured. That is what this system is built to produce.

1-ON-1 ONLINE COACHING

A fully custom plan built around your pain history, goals, and schedule.
Expert eyes on every rep. The fastest path to pain-free.

\$1,200 / month

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