

# Low Back Pain



## Background

Low back pain is very common but a precise cause is often not found. Researchers found that 60-80% of people will experience uncomplicated back pain at some time in their life. Possible causes include:

**Lumbar Strain:** strain or microscopic tears of the muscles and ligaments.

**Facet Joint Syndrome:** joints can be injured from a sudden force where the back is twisted or arched, or where the spine is repetitively placed into extension.

**Herniated Disc:** the soft "shock absorber" disc structure becomes swollen and pinches nearby nerve cells.

**Degenerated Disc:** the discs lose moisture and function.

# Low Back Pain

## Treatment

### REGISTERED MASSAGE THERAPISTS MAY HELP:

- decrease pain
- decrease muscle spasm
- improve function and range of motion
- provide an exercise program to assist return to full function

Researchers have found that 70% of acute patients with non-specific low back pain will improve within two weeks, and 90% will improve and resume their normal activity within four to five weeks.

## Research

### Review of the evidence for the effectiveness, safety, and cost of acupuncture, massage therapy & spinal manipulation for back pain

The study showed that massage therapy was more effective and also more cost-effective in the treatment of low back pain, than acupuncture or spinal manipulation. (Daniel C. Cherkin et al, *Annals of Internal Medicine* 2003, 138:898-906.)

### Massage for low-back pain

New, high quality trials show that massage gives some relief from back pain that has continued for many weeks or months - and the benefit may continue at least a year after the course of massage is over. Massage was more likely to work when combined with exercises (usually stretching) and education. There is a trend showing that the greatest benefit came with massage from an experienced licenced massage therapists. (Furlan AD, Brosseau, Imamura M, Irvin E., *The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2006 Issue 1, Copyright © 2006 The Cochrane Collaboration)

Visit [www.massagetherapy.bc.ca](http://www.massagetherapy.bc.ca) for more information