

# THE 3 SECRETS

To Beating Back Pain forever



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# The 3 Secrets to Beating Back Pain forever

have been developed and revealed through Core's revolutionary SpinePhysio & Exercise Program!

If you suffer from moderate to severe back pain, please answer the following 4 questions:

**Question 1:** Have you had back pain for more than 3 months?

**Question 2:** Have you found that weekly massages, treatments, medication, acupuncture or yoga isn't nipping back pain in the butt and is getting expensive?

**Question 3:** Do you regard yourself as careful with lifting and strong through your abs - but still can't sleep at night due to severe back pain?

**Question 4:** Are you considering injections, procedures or even surgery because of this?

If you answered yes to any of these questions then you must read this report for learning the 3 simple steps to beating chronic back pain forever!



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## INTRODUCTION

I'm Drew Singleton, one of the Physiotherapists at Core Physiotherapy & Exercise Centres working throughout South East Queensland. I have been studying or practicing Physiotherapy for almost 20 years.

During this time I've had an abundance of wonderful experiences, having worked in community paediatrics, aged care, sports medicine, strength and conditioning, musculo-skeletal private practice, occupational rehabilitation, and corporate health programs across the eastern seaboard of Australia.

By far the most rewarding part of my career has been developing with the team at Core my knowledge, understanding and practice around persistent spinal pain - more commonly referred to as chronic back pain, or back pain lasting longer than 3 months.

I suspect the reason for this lies with both my fascination as to how profoundly this disorder can impact the suffering individual; and the striking, circus of events which often accompanies them through their subsequent healthcare and lifestyle journey.

Patients' suffering from chronic back pain naturally think that "cure-searching" and "relief" are of the utmost priority for their care. More often than not, this leads to their family and various medical and allied health professionals (either knowingly or inadvertently) trying to facilitate "fixes", and enable disability - thus unfortunately dis-empowering their patients or loved ones further as a consequence.

An example of this is rife in America currently where an opioid addiction crisis is gaining formidable traction, fueled initially by poor pain management at the primary care level, and most notably with back pain.



For this very reason, chronic back pain is often referred to as the "invisible" disorder. It is poorly understood at both the medical and community level, and even more poorly managed.

### **There are 3 key impacts on the individual suffering from chronic back pain:**

1. Significant physical injury and associated functional disability.
2. Elevated psychological influences including increased stress, depression and anxiety levels.
3. Considerable social impact on family, lifestyle and work-related interests.

What patients, healthcare providers, insurance companies, and society in general must understand is that chronic back pain disorders may not be "cured" by treatment, medications, procedures or surgeries; that "answers" lie not in "finding relief", but rather in receiving education about pain and pain management schemas; that these strategies must integrate biopsychosocial factors; and that the patient's understanding and involvement is central to achieving effective and sustainable outcomes.

Quite simply, patients with chronic back pain need to be managed as people, and not diagnoses.

## **When this is done effectively, chronic back pain sufferers benefit in 3 ways:**

1. Greater understanding of the impact chronic pain can have on their nervous system, and that by simply treating their diagnosed injuries won't necessarily lead to improved activity or reduced pain levels.
2. Less stress and anxiety towards one's pain experiences - allowing the person to feel more confidence to start moving with pain, rather than trying to avoid increasing it.
3. Restored independence with activities of daily living by learning how to live life (at least initially) with pain, as opposed to not living life because of it, thereby working towards overcoming pain levels completely in time.

The purpose of this report is to summarise how to understand and develop these skills, of which we as clinicians at Core have refined over the past 20 years of experience with our patients.

Our goal is to help each chronic back pain sufferer build a personalised "tool box" of definitive strategies to improve physical activity and overcome debilitating back pain, thus ensuring fantastic outcomes.

## **The 3 main factors proven to be most valuable in over-coming back pain are:**

1. Back Pain Education.
2. Tailored Activity Specific Exercise Programs.
3. Lifestyle and Ergonomic Strategies for Movement.

When we talk about the first factor of Back Pain Education, this means gaining a detailed knowledge of what you've actually done to yourself, and how this can be a perfectly normal experience with standard time-frames for physiologically healing.

In fact, most back injuries heal as best they will within 3 to 6 months post incident, so once red flags have been ruled out and the relative time periods have passed, the skill here is to actively return to normal things as quickly as possible, whilst mastering reassurance regarding hurt vs harm.





Understanding hurt vs harm means that just because things may seem painful at first when initially getting going, this doesn't mean they are actually causing you harm, or your "problem" is getting worse. Most of the time these types of symptoms are reflective of your nervous system de-sensitising and adjusting to you moving once again.

Once you have this skill mastered, the next step here is working on your mindset and attitudes towards pain. By this we mean that the associated mood and stress impact from chronic back pain is completely normal, and unless channeled, can become as equally unhelpful to your ongoing pain experience to that of your initial physical injury. So, by using relaxation and other psychological techniques such as mindfulness, one can actively learn to take control of their natural thoughts around apprehension from pain, and simply increase their function in progressive bursts knowing they are on the road to recovery. Working with a counsellor or psychologist can be particularly helpful here when initially trying to develop these skills.

When considering the role of Tailored Exercise Programs, it's highly likely a chronic back pain sufferer has attempted stretches or exercises before as part of an initial treatment program. There are many types of back exercise programs, these range from aquatic or hydrotherapy, core exercises, clinical pilates and yoga, resistance/weights programs, and cardiovascular exercise (step count walking, swimming etc). From a patient's experience, these techniques may or may not have been helpful initially, or simply weren't as effective as time went on.



The usefulness of any exercise for back pain can be attributed to what type is prescribed at which part of the patient's treatment journey, and how consistent the patient is at completing same as part of their daily regime.

Current evidence shows that movement really is medicine - however there is "no one size fits all" recipe. With chronic back pain rehabilitation there is an individualised need to balance exercise protocols to each back pain sufferer, to ensure maximum effect for one's strength, flexibility or mobility, whilst minimising the risk of flare-up from "over-doing it". Progressing exercises to ultimately those which are simulating activities of daily living for each person is best practice. Our Core Physiotherapists' role is to individualise each patient's exercise program to ensure maximum results, in the most rapid time-frame.

The third and final piece of solving the chronic back pain puzzle is the need to understand and refine ergonomic and lifestyle strategies when moving - because prevention really is better than cure! Considerations to one's diet and medication regime is important to ensure there are no unknowing contributing influences to one's back pain experience. Some medications may no longer be appropriate for pain management, and ironically can be part of the problem, contributing to one's pain experience.



Excess alcohol and smoking can also influence back pain levels. Discussing this with each patient's healthcare providers is vital to ensure all adjuncts are complimenting and not conflicting one another for assisting the goal of improved function for back pain sufferers.

One of the most important ergonomic skills in back pain management is "Pacing" – either planned or reflective in nature. Understanding the need to focus on the quality of what you are doing, and not necessarily the quantity is vital. The cliché "slow and steady wins the race" summarises pacing skills nicely for tackling chronic back pain. When one is trying to upgrade their daily activities, pacing can simply be the skill of forward planning how they can do this in progressive steps, to increase the likelihood of achieving such goals, at minimal risk of flare-ups. Pacing is also post activity success or failure reflection in the event of flare-up of symptoms. This means taking the time to breakdown exactly how you went about doing something – ie: sit, squat, bend, lift or twist over time - to try and understand what could have been done differently to change your post-activity pain levels. In this space, the chronic back pain sufferer must become the expert in knowing and understanding their current capacity limitations - to invariably maintain control over improving these over time through pacing strategies.



In summary, from my 20 years of experience working in this space, honed with my team of experts at Core we've found that simply integrating these 3 steps into your approach to beating chronic back pain is the key to success. Often shifting your focus to what you can do with pain, as opposed to what you can't do because of pain, is a very helpful starting point to actioning your back pain management strategy.

If you are, or know of anyone who might currently be losing the battle with chronic back pain, and they are currently undertaking some of the previously mentioned medical approaches in hope of change, please make them aware that current evidence suggests these interventions will more likely than not, lead to poor outcomes.

Our program is available across all our Gold Coast and Brisbane clinics. For more information on the components and research behind our SpinePhysio & Exercise program<sup>™</sup> visit [www.corehealthcare.com.au](http://www.corehealthcare.com.au).

For booking one of our initial SpinePhysio Assessments<sup>™</sup> phone 1300 012 273, or direct message us at [www.facebook.com/spinephysioexercise](https://www.facebook.com/spinephysioexercise) and arrange to see one of our senior physiotherapists.

Thanks for taking the time to learn the initial 3 steps of how to beat back pain forever!!

Kind Regards

**Drew Singleton**

APA Pain Physiotherapist