

PRESS RELEASE

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Study Says That Exercise and Education Are Key to Preventing Low Back Pain

Four out of five Americans will experience back pain at some point in their lives. Today, back pain management often includes the overuse of treatments like surgeries, MRI, x-rays and medications. And it's an expensive prospect: The annual tally on low back and neck pain treatment in the U.S. is at least \$87 billion, according to a study in the *Journal of American Medical Association*.

As it turns out, experts are testing less expensive solutions that aim to prevent occurrences of back pain in the first place, and the results are encouraging. A study called [Prevention of Low Back Pain](#) investigated the effectiveness of interventions like education and exercise in preventing low back pain. The key, according to the study, is the combination of exercise and education. Exercise alone is thought to make a difference, but when used in conjunction, exercise and education pack the most powerful punch.

The best avenue is to see a healthcare professional like a physical therapist who is trained to prevent and treat pain through movement and exercise, hands-on care and patient education. These movement specialists perform evaluations to assess your muscular, postural and skeletal limitations, and other factors that could one day contribute to back pain.

You probably equate physical therapists with exercise, but did you know that patient education also is a cornerstone of the physical therapy profession? Relying on their formal education and practice experience, PTs can provide insights and interventions that reduce excess body mass, improve health status and reduce associated chronic disease risk by increasing physical activity.

Not only is it easy to find physical therapists that lead evidence-based prevention and wellness programs right in your community, but once you've made an appointment, you'll benefit from personalized one-on-one care and easy access. You can expect the PT to begin treatment by gathering pertinent information about your movement patterns, limitations, posture and other factors that might contribute to back pain. Once the physical therapist has observed as you perform a series of exercises and gathered an account of your daily activity level and environmental factors like working at a desk 40 hours a week, she can teach you a few strategies to prevent back pain.

And with eight in 10 people experiencing back pain at some point in their lives, preventing incidences would not only take a huge chunk out of the staggering annual costs associated with treatments like medications and surgeries, but also ensure that people are on the road to better health.

About The Private Practice Section of the American Physical Therapy Association

Founded in 1956, the Private Practice Section of the American Physical Therapy Association champions the success of physical therapist-owned businesses. Our members are leaders and innovators in the health care system. The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) represents more than 85,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants and students of physical therapy nationwide. For more information, please visit www.ppsapta.org.