

7 Top Reasons to See a Physical Therapist First to Fix Your Lower Back Pain

You hurt your lower back. Now what?

Should you see a doctor?

Do you need an MRI to know what is wrong?

When will I be back to normal?

These questions are common and there are some things you should know before you see your doctor who will most likely prescribe medicine, give you an injection, or order x-rays or an MRI before referring you to a surgeon.

All this has been shown to over-medicalize your situation, attach diagnostic labels that don't matter and only complicates and delays your recovery.

Here are the top 7 reasons to see a McKenzie-trained lower- back- pain specialist first

1. *Your pain comes and goes.* If you have times when you don't have lower back pain, then your pain is mechanical (moving parts are not aligned), not chemical (inflammation) and can often resolve quickly without medicine if you know exactly what to do. A PT specialist will assess to understand your symptom behavior and your motion patterns, so you know how to turn it off. Then and only then can you heal without interruption.

2. *Your pain is sometimes felt in your thigh or leg.* Pain in your thigh or leg is usually referred pain from your lower back. If your pain moves to your lower back during some positions or movements, this is a good sign. Your PT specialist can show you how to keep the leg pain away which is the #1 indicator for a successful recovery. Often times there is a rapid reversal of leg pain on the very first visit.

3. *You are worse when sitting for prolonged periods.* Sitting is generally worse because of the position of your lower back posture and the pressure it produces in the discs. A simple \$20 McKenzie roll can do wonders and is important in the healing process. Think about what you would do for a cut knuckle on your finger. Would you bend it or keep it straight, so the injury can heal? Posture control is important!

4. *Your pain increases when you rise from sitting.* This is a classic sign of a common type of back pain that is often rapidly reversed if you stand and bend backwards a few times before you start walking. This will be identified in your initial visit and steps will be taken to correct it. When this symptom disappears you can know you are on the quick road to recovery.

5. ***You are generally worse during or right after prolonged bending or stooping and have a harder time straightening up.*** Just like what happens during sitting, this is a sign that there is a movement problem caused by the injury. Performing the standing backward movement at regular intervals is indicated and it is best to avoid bending forward if you can help it during the early phase of healing.

6. ***You are generally worse first thing in the morning.*** This will tell your physical therapist that you need additional posture control for sleeping so your spine stays supported and avoids the sagging that usually occurs when side lying. Just like the McKenzie roll that is needed for sitting, your physical therapist should show you how a night roll is useful to get a good night sleep.

7. ***You may feel a little better with walking but still have a glitch in your hitch.*** Pain with walking affects more than half of people with lower back pain. Pain during walking indicates a one-sided problem that can usually be corrected with the right technique your PT can identify during an examination. This is critical for your lower back to heal properly and not cause problems in the hip, knees or feet.

McKenzie-trained physical therapists reliably perform accurate mechanical examinations to help determine exactly what your lower back needs to heal. The McKenzie-method is the most researched system in the world and is the method of choice among physical therapists.

Seeing a PT spine specialist first will help you avoid more expensive medical interventions, the side-effects of medications and injections, or surgery that will alter your life.

Let us help you get you moving again without the pain.

Troy Marsh, PT, Cert. MDT is a private practice owner and has treated lower back pain for over 25 years and credits the McKenzie Method in helping him overcome ten years of chronic lower back pain. After recovering, he got his life back and ran 100 and 50-mile trail runs for 15 years.



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