



## WELLPATH'S HEALTHY BACK CHALLENGE



# BUILDING YOUR BETTER BACK PROGRAM

## Avoiding pain – avoiding treatment

BACK PAIN AND CHRONIC BACK CONDITIONS ARE CRAZY-COMMON. ONE OF THE REASONS THE PAIN CAN COME AND GO IS BECAUSE THE SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM ISN'T OFTEN DETERMINED AND THEREFORE NOT TREATED. OFTEN REST AND AVOIDING AGGRAVATION MAKES THE PAIN GO AWAY, FOR A WHILE.

IN FACT, SOME PROFESSIONALS REFER TO BACK INJURIES AS "*SELF-LIMITING INJURIES*." THE TERM SELF-LIMITING MEANS THAT ALMOST EVERYONE WILL DO LESS ACTIVITY THAN THEY ARE ABLE TO DO SAFELY TO AVOID PAIN. THE PAIN OFTEN PRESENTS ITSELF TO WARN YOU FROM MAKING MOVEMENTS THAT WILL CAUSE YOU FURTHER INJURY. SO, USING PAIN-FREE MOVEMENTS ARE TYPICALLY SAFE AND SHOULDN'T AGGRAVATE YOUR CONDITION.

BED REST IS A COMMON SELF-PRESCRIBED TREATMENT FOR BACK PAIN. IT IS SOMETIMES THE ONLY POSTURE THAT CAN LIMIT THE PAIN. COMMON WISDOM IS THAT BED REST ISN'T TYPICALLY CALLED FOR IN THE TREATMENT OF BACK PAIN AND AFTER TWO-DAYS IT CAN BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. "BED REST" IS DIFFERENT FROM LYING SUPINE TO REDUCE THE STRESS ON THE SPINE FOR LIMITED PERIODS OF TIME. "UNLOADING YOUR SPINE" IS THE PRODUCTIVE PRACTICE OF LYING DOWN TO REDUCE THE STRESS THAT CAN CAUSE PAIN AND INFLAMMATION. WHEN EXPERIENCING BACK PAIN, ONE MIGHT UNLOAD THEIR SPINE SEVERAL TIMES PER DAY.

TRYING TO REDUCE MOVEMENTS THAT CAUSE PAIN AND BED REST ARE TWO COMMON METHODS OF AVOIDING AGGRAVATION WHILE WAITING FOR THE PAIN TO GO AWAY. ONCE THE PAIN IS GONE, AVOIDING ACTIVITIES THAT CAUSES THE PAIN TO REAPPEAR IS CONSIDERED "SELF-MANAGEMENT." THIS PROCESS DOESN'T TREAT THE ACTUAL CAUSE OF THE PAIN.

## Real self-management

THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF BACK CONDITIONS ARE TREATABLE, TO A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE WITH LIFESTYLE. THE *HEALTHY BACK CHALLENGE* ADDRESSES THESE LIFESTYLE FACTORS. WE SHOULD CONSIDER POSTURE, FITNESS AND ACTIVITY LEVEL, LIFTING TECHNIQUE, HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENTS, BODY COMPOSITION, THREATS TO OUR BACK HEALTH AND A TREATMENT PLAN FOR BACK PAIN IF/WHEN IT REAPPEARS TO BE THE CORNERSTONE OF SELF-MANAGEMENT.

EXERCISE IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE LIFESTYLE FACTOR IN SPEEDING HEALING, CURING CONDITIONS AND PREVENTING REOCCURRING BACK PAIN IN THE MAJORITY OF CASES.

IF YOU CURRENTLY HAVE BACK PAIN OR HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH A SPECIFIC INJURY OR CONDITION, THEN YOU SHOULD CONSULT YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM ABOUT THE LIFESTYLE PROGRAM THAT WOULD WORK BEST FOR YOU. THE *HEALTHY BACK CHALLENGE* PROVIDES GENERALIZED INFORMATION THAT ISN'T INTENDED TO BE SPECIFIC MEDICAL ADVICE WHICH SHOULD ONLY COME FROM YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM.

IF YOU ARE NOT UNDER ANY RESTRICTIONS IN TERMS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, THEN THE HEALTHY BACK CHALLENGE WILL HELP YOU BUILD AN INDIVIDUALIZED EXERCISE PLAN TO LESSEN THE FREQUENCY AND SEVERITY OF BACK PAIN OR, PREVENT THE PAIN ALL TOGETHER. THIS EXERCISE PLAN WILL BE BUILT SYSTEMATICALLY OVER THE TIME OF THE CHALLENGE.

## Building your back program systematically

WHETHER YOU STRUGGLE WITH CHRONIC BACK PAIN OR JUST WANT TO BE ONE OF THE 10% OF PEOPLE WHO MAKE IT THROUGH LIFE WITHOUT EXPERIENCING SIGNIFICANT BACK PAIN, DEVELOPING AN EXERCISE ROUTINE WHICH IS INDIVIDUALIZED AND HABITUAL IS FOR YOU. MOST PEOPLE WHO EXERCISE REGULARLY DO NOT ADDRESS BACK HEALTH SPECIFICALLY IN THEIR REGULAR PROGRAM. THIS IS A SHAME BECAUSE ADDING 10–15 MINUTES OF FLEXIBILITY AND MUSCULAR ENDURANCE EXERCISE 3 DAYS A WEEK OR MORE CAN MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE HEALTH OF YOUR BACK.

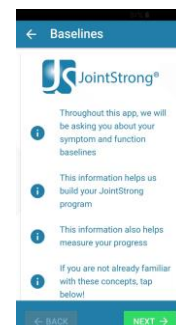
HERE'S THE *MIRACLE SYSTEM*\* WELLPATH HAS COME UP WITH FOR YOU:

1. SET YOUR BASELINES:
  - A. SYMPTOM
  - B. FUNCTION
  - C. EXERCISE (AFTER YOU CHOOSE AN EXERCISE)
2. REVIEW YOUR ASSESSMENT RESULTS (IF YOU COMPLETED ASSESSMENT(S))
3. CHOOSE AN EXERCISE
4. REEVALUATE SYMPTOMS AND FUNCTION

\**MIRACLE SYSTEM* IS MEANT TO BE SILLY, OFTEN TRIED AND TRUE, CONSERVATIVE EXERCISE PRINCIPLES ARE MOST EFFECTIVE, WHEN DONE CONSISTENTLY OVER TIME.

## SETTING BASELINES:

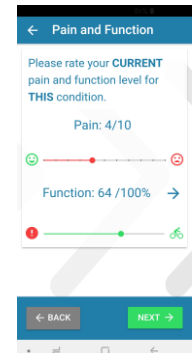
TO REALLY KNOW IF AN EXERCISE IS RIGHT FOR YOU, YOU WILL HAVE TO TRY IT TO SEE IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER/WORSE, AND IF IT IMPROVES/DIMINISHES YOUR FUNCTION. THE TERMS IMPROVES-DIMINISHES AND BETTER-WORSE IMPLIES DIRECTION. TO DETERMINE A DIRECTION, YOU MUST KNOW FROM WHERE YOU ARE STARTING (A BASELINE). ONCE YOU CHOOSE AN EXERCISE YOU WILL WANT TO SET YOUR *GENERAL* AND *SPECIFIC* BASELINES TO WHICH YOU WILL COMPARE IN THE FUTURE TO DETERMINE IF YOU ARE GETTING BETTER/WORSE ETC.



**GENERAL BASELINES** ARE SET AND USED FOR ALL YOUR EXERCISES. YOUR FIRST **GENERAL BASELINES** ARE **SYMPTOMATIC BASELINES**: ARE YOU HAVING PAIN NOW? HOW BAD IS THE CURRENT PAIN? WHAT MOVEMENTS MAKES THE PAIN WORSE? WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MAKE THE PAIN BETTER? PAIN WAS USED AS AN EXAMPLE, BUT THE

SYMPTOM COULD BE NUMBNESS, TINGLING, ETC. YOUR SECOND GENERAL BASELINE IS YOUR **FUNCTIONAL BASELINE**: WHAT MOVEMENTS OR ACTIVITIES ARE YOU HAVING DIFFICULTY AND/OR SYMPTOMS PERFORMING. THE [JOINTSTRONG™ APP](#) HELPS YOU SET YOUR BASELINES.

**SPECIFIC BASELINES** ARE SPECIFIC TO THE EXERCISE YOU CHOOSE. THE FIRST [SPECIFIC BASELINE](#) IS **DIFFICULTY**: HOW DIFFICULT IS IT FOR YOU TO PERFORM THE EXERCISE PROPERLY? HOW MUCH OF THE EXERCISE CAN YOU DO (FREQUENCY AND DURATION)? THE SECOND SPECIFIC BASELINE IS **SYMPTOMATIC**: DOES THE EXERCISE CAUSE ANY SYMPTOMS WHILE PERFORMING THE EXERCISE? DOES THE EXERCISE CAUSE ANY SYMPTOMS IMMEDIATELY AFTER AND UP TO 5-MINUTES AFTER PERFORMING THE EXERCISE? DOES THE EXERCISE CAUSE SYMPTOMS THAT LAST LONGER THAN 5-MINUTES? DOES THE EXERCISE CAUSE DELAYED ONSET OF MUSCLE SORENESS (DOMS) OR OTHER SYMPTOMS THE NEXT DAY? DOES THE EXERCISE CAUSE SYMPTOMS AS YOU REPEAT IT OVER DAYS? AGAIN THE [JOINTSTRONG™](#) APP WILL HELP YOU SET THESE BASELINES.



START BY CHOOSING AN EXERCISE TO INCORPORATE INTO YOUR *HEALTHY BACK PROGRAM*. IF YOU PERFORMED EITHER OF THE BACK ASSESSMENTS IN WEEK ONE AND TWO OF THE HEALTHY BACK CHALLENGE, THE RESULTS CAN HELP YOU IDENTIFY EXERCISES THAT MAY ADDRESS YOUR WEAKNESSES AND THE THREATS TO THE HEALTH OF YOUR BACK. HOWEVER, A WELL-ROUNDED EXERCISE ROUTINE THAT ADDRESSES FLEXIBILITY AND MUSCULAR ENDURANCE, AS WELL AS AEROBIC FITNESS IS THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE. IF YOU HAVE HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONERS WITH WHOM YOU CONSULT REGARDING YOUR BACK, IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO REVIEW THE EXERCISES YOU CHOOSE WITH THEM.

## REVIEW YOUR ASSESSMENT RESULTS:

IF YOU USED THE JOINTSTRONG™ APP TO DO AN ASSESSMENT IN THE SECOND WEEK OF THE CHALLENGE THEN THE APP WILL WALK YOU THROUGH THE ENTIRE PROCESS OF SETTING BASELINES, AND CHOOSING EXERCISES BASED ON YOUR ASSESSMENT.

IF YOU COMPLETED THE *HEALTHY BACK ASSESSMENT* IN WEEK ONE, THEN YOU SHOULD CONSIDER THE QUESTIONNAIRE WHICH OUTLINES YOUR NON-MODIFIABLE AND MODIFIABLE RISK FACTORS TO ASSESS YOUR RISK FOR BACK CONDITIONS/PAIN IN THE FUTURE. THE *HEALTHY BACK TESTS* WERE SOME OF THE MODIFIABLE RISK FACTORS ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE. WELLPATH HAS CREATED GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS TO HELP YOU CHOOSE EXERCISES BASED ON YOUR PERFORMANCE ON THESE TESTS. THESE WILL BE AVAILABLE NEXT WEEK. IF YOU HAD DIFFICULTY PERFORMING A TEST, NOTICED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ONE SIDE OF YOUR BODY COMPARED TO THE OTHER, AND/OR YOU FAILED A TEST, THEN THIS MAY INDICATE THE MUSCLES AND MOVEMENTS YOU WANT TO TARGET WITH YOUR EXERCISE ROUTINE.

## CHOOSE AN EXERCISE:

NEXT WEEK YOU WILL CHOOSE AN EXERCISE. USE THE HBC EXERCISE FORM TO 1) RECORD THE EXERCISE (AVAILABLE SOON ON [WWW.WELLPATH.INFO/CHALLENGES](http://WWW.WELLPATH.INFO/CHALLENGES)), 2) MAKE NOTES TO HELP YOU PERFORM THE EXERCISE CORRECTLY, 3) DETERMINE THE FREQUENCY, INTENSITY AND DURATION OF WHICH YOU WILL PERFORM THE EXERCISE AND CREATE YOUR BASELINE ASSESSMENTS BEFORE STARTING THE EXERCISE.

THEN YOU WILL START PERFORMING THAT EXERCISE REGULARLY. PAY ATTENTION WHEN YOU ARE PERFORMING THE EXERCISE TO SEE IF IT CAUSES ANY PAIN OR OTHER SYMPTOMS. ASSESS THE DIFFICULTY WITH WHICH YOU PERFORM THE EXERCISE.

## REEVALUATE SYMPTOMS AND FUNCTION:

IF THE EXERCISE DOESN'T WORSEN YOUR FUNCTION OR CAUSE LASTING PAIN, THEN THAT IS A SIGN THAT YOU CAN CONTINUE THE EXERCISE.

AFTER YOU HAVE PERFORMED THE EXERCISE 3-TIMES, THEN REEVALUATE YOUR SYMPTOMS AND FUNCTION COMPARED TO YOUR BASELINES (GENERAL & SPECIFIC BASELINES). IF NOTHING IS WORSE, CONSIDER THAT IT TAKES TIME FOR THE BODY TO MAKE PHYSIOLOGICAL ADAPTATIONS WHICH IMPROVE FUNCTION AND CONDITIONS. SO SOMETIMES NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS FOR A FEW WEEKS. YOU WILL SEE IMPROVEMENT COMPARED TO THE EXERCISE-SPECIFIC BASELINES BEFORE YOU WILL SEE IMPROVEMENT COMPARED TO THE GENERAL BASELINES.

EACH WEEK, OR SO, YOU CAN ADD A NEW EXERCISE TO YOUR ROUTINE. CHOOSE A NEW EXERCISE, FILL OUT A NEW FORM AND START THE PROCESS OVER AGAIN. DO THIS AS YOU CONTINUE TO PERFORM THE EXERCISES YOU HAVE ALREADY STARTED.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, OR WOULD LIKE HELP WITH THIS PROCESS, CONSIDER CONTACTING A WELLPATH COACH. YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE COACHES AND FIND CONTACT INFORMATION AT [WWW.WELLPATH.INFO/COACHING](http://WWW.WELLPATH.INFO/COACHING).

NOTE: SUPPORTING INFORMATION: EXERCISES, BASELINE TRACKERS, ETC. COMING SOON. STAY TUNED TO [WWW.WELLPATH.INFO/CHALLENGES](http://WWW.WELLPATH.INFO/CHALLENGES).