

May 1-7th Welcomes Spinal Health Week



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Spinal health week coincides with spring cleaning, a new gardening season and a seasonal change that inspires more physical activity in all of us. While great for our physical and mental health, new physical activities can take a toll on our backs. This makes spinal health week a great time to remind ourselves how important our spines are in our everyday life.

Your spine has a lot of influence in your health and wellness. The spine is made up of many bones called vertebrae, which are surrounded by muscles and ligaments that support the body's weight and give us strength. Shock-absorbing discs lie between the vertebrae, absorbing force as we walk, jump, lift and endure the basics of everyday life while tiny joints connect the vertebrae making the spine flexible and allowing us to bend, turn, and twist. Also, the spine protects the central highway of the nervous system, our spinal cord. Unfortunately, despite the spine's role in maintaining our health, people often wait for weeks or even months before seeking treatment.

Did you know that one third of all Ontarians suffer from back pain at any given time? Or that 80% of people will experience back pain during their life? This makes spinal pain a serious health problem affecting our daily lives. The irony however is that most of us do not think about our spines until we have a problem. Perhaps it's time to start thinking about how you can improve your spinal health before it becomes a problem.

Preventing back injury should always be your first thought. This means minimizing your risk of injury. As you're introducing yourself into new activities, remember to pace yourself, take rest breaks and allow your body to adapt to new seasonal demands like gardening and lawn care. Remember to stretch before and after activities. When lifting, keep the object close to your body and use power from your legs to move it, rather than taxing your back muscles. Most importantly, use proper technique. Whether swinging a golf club or raking the garden, how you move has a great effect on how you will feel later that day.

Consider talking to a healthcare professional or your occupational health advisor for more information on reducing your spinal stress. Professional resources, such as the Ontario Chiropractic Association, also offer excellent public education on reducing spinal stress during activities such as golfing, gardening, traveling or even carrying a backpack to school!



Restorative Health

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As spinal health week is about awareness, reconsider the role that your spine plays in your health, well-being and general function. You may be surprised at how easy it is take care of your spine.

