

# 4 Rules to Long-Term Relief

It's taken me over 4 years to dial in on some of the biggest factors that have been the sole reason for my back pain. If I only knew half of what I know now and what I am about to give you I would be in a way better position today than I was back then. Unfortunately, the majority of us who suffer with back pain are very limited when it comes to getting help outside of surgery or pain medications.

Doctors only ever gave me advice pertaining to their skill set which is surgery, painkillers or referring you to someone else. As you frantically search through google for your locally listed for Sports Chiro's, Physical Therapists etc. you never really know who you're going to get and whether or not they are going to look at your case the way they should. I know for me, I was given access to this "special" physician database which gave me a listing of sport specific specialists and I went with the closest one to me...35 minutes away.

I won't go into detail but about \$900 dollars later he was still treating me for sciatica and I told him from the beginning I am only experience inflammation and muscle tightness. That's it.

This is how the first 5-6 years of my diagnosis went. Years went by along with a couple thousand dollars and after kicking the doctors to the curb I decided to put my degree in Exercise Science along with my 10+ years in the fitness industry to the test. I was convinced I could beat my chronic pain on my own.

Fast forward even more time and now I teach people like you how to put their own pieces of the puzzle together. Even though I hated going through all that time, wasting so much money and failing so many times, this frustration lead me to creating this website and this gift your reading here.

As you work through this book, I don't want you to think that these 4 points are the only thing that matter when it comes beating your back pain. Back pain is like a multi layer bean dip you gotta get it all on the chip to get the full affect. What I mean by that is take these 4 points and apply them to your rehab program. The only thing that matters is starting off on the right foot.

This goes without saying but remember if you are experiencing any kind of lower back pain go get it checked out by a professional who can look deeper into your situation. I went to three different specialists and had two different MRI's before I was confident enough to tackle it myself. Get the doc to rule out anything major just to be safe.

Enough about me.

**The foundation to self-treating back pain can be broken down into 4 different parts.**

**Let's break them down.**



## **1- Know your pain triggers**

**The first thing I work through with any of my clients is understanding their own personal pain triggers. This is vital to any personalized rehab program.**

What I want you to do is sit down with pen and paper and draw a line down the middle of that sheet of paper. On one side, I want you to list out all of the movements and positions that you do on a daily bases that cause you discomfort and pain. Be specific and write down everything you can think of. On the other side, I want you to write down all the positions and activities that bring relief. List everything and anything (other then popping pain killers haha).

This list is key to connecting the dots when it comes to dialing in on possible intolerances you may have. Understanding these intolerances will help further understand your specific issues in more detail. This is where a little pattern recognition comes in. If you notice a lot of your pain being based around having a flexed spine then odds are (not a professional diagnosis) you have some sort of flexion intolerance. The pain you're experiencing could be overworked or "tight" lower back muscles or some other potential disc issues. Knowing this will help you dial in on the specific areas of your life that you may need to address.

There are a few different routes you can take with this list but for starters make it a point to spend less time doing the things that cause you pain and more time doing the things that bring relief. When it comes to things like bending and sitting, it's not so much about stopping these things all together but improving and mastering the way you do it.

**One thing that I encourage anyone I talk to to remember:**

"Back pain is typically caused by the accumulation of POOR postures and habits over a period of time. In order to find relief, you have to accumulate time in HEALTHY postures and habits."

It's the simple fact of reverse engineering what you did to get here in the first place.



## 2 - Exercise: Make sure you're ready

The goal for any back pain sufferer is to reduce the the sensitivity in the lower back. Whether this is from some kind of disc issue, facet joint issue or inflammation. Even if your doctor said the scans came back with no physical damage. You have to teach yourself to be aware of what you're doing and how you're moving.

This applies directly to the time you spend in the gym. Most doctors once you have been cleared, will tell you to work on being more active and maybe start some kind of exercise regimen.

This is where things can get dicey.

Yes, you may have been cleared, but you need to ask yourself one question.

**What has my doctor taught me about PREVENTING the pain from returning.**

Or (for those who have been operated on)

## **What has my doctor/surgeon taught me that will help prevent becoming a repeat customer?**

What did you learn that will keep him from going back to the same bad habits and movements you did before?. Nothing. Surgeons don't teach you the basics. They see a problem and they cut it out.

This is why time in the gym needs to be intentional. Don't just go into the gym and start "doing what you normally would do". If you're working with a trainer then he/she needs to know what exercises you should be doing to strengthen the lower back and help bring stability to the spine.

This isn't meant to scare you from going into the gym but if you just joined that new CrossFit gym or boot camp class, don't fall into the trap of thinking just because you're exercising that your pain will go away. **Always follow one rule.** If your exercise program hurts, stop doing it. If you're midway through a workout and your lower back is getting tight and you start experiencing some weird lower back pain, hang it up. Back pain is never something to just push through. That's not what rehabbing a bad back is about. Your workout program should be geared towards strengthening your weaknesses and progressing with little to no pain.



## 3 - Master the 3 pillars

The three things we do the most every single day of our life are **sitting, standing and bending**. The crazy cool thing about this statement is that it transcend into your active life (running, exercising, walking etc) just as much as your passive life (sitting at home eating, sitting/standing at work, daily chores etc) The same fundamental principles must be followed.

**Sitting** requires attention to detail with how you're stacking your body and how often you are moving. You can't expect to sit in one chair the same way for hours a day and expect not to eventually develop chronic issues. Stack your head neck and and shoulders on top of a lightly braced core and neutral pelvis. This will feel weird at first but it's simply a non-negotiable.

Once proper stacking can be achieved, changing your sitting options or positions as often as possible is the next step. If you're at a desk job the worst thing you can do is not move. Get up and walk around, if you can work a standing work station into your environment, do it. If you can give yourself more options to sit on that is even better. Be creative.

**Standing:** This is normally where imbalances will present themselves. For example, if your dealing with an Anterior Pelvic Tilt, eventually after standing for so long your lower back is going to get tighter and tighter. This is where reversing the APT and working on bracing the core and neutralizing the pelvis will bring massive relief.

Another example would be rounded shoulders. If you don't correct posture issues like this, you will constantly be battling lower back tightness simply because your lower back can't relax. That forward leaning posture keeps the lower back constantly contracted to help support the upper body and its dysfunctions. Fix this and you will start to see improvements in pain while standing.

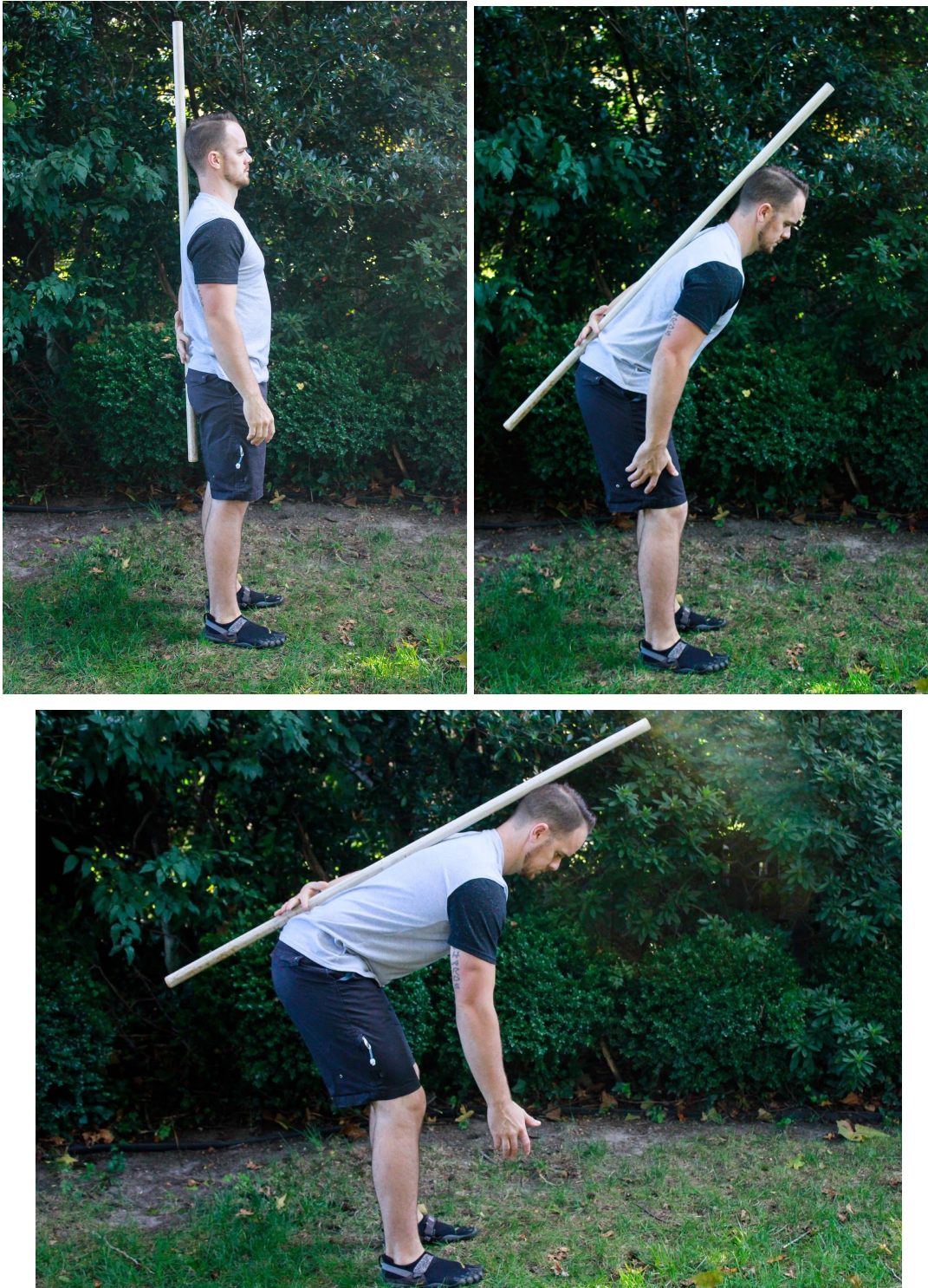
**Bending:** The power of a proper hip hinge is very real. It can take someone from living with chronic lower back pain to none at all. Of course this isn't everyone's situation but it's always your best bet to work on improving the hip hinge. The hip hinge is the single action that allows our body to carry loads, distribute weight and connect the entire body together as a kinetic chain. Whether you're going from a standing position to a seated position or vice versa, you are using a hip hinge. This same thing applies to your active life as well. bending over in the gym to grab weights or doing exercises require you to bend at the waist. You have the choice to either do it in a way that will spare the lower back or cause more irritation. Lets choose to spare the back! **Do this now:**

The next page will show you how to master the basics of hip hinging. Learning to hip hinge is crucial to lower back health.



## Assisted Hip Hinge Basics

Check out the images below to know exactly how to practice hip hinging the right way.







## 4 - Don't hang your hat on what the MRI says.

When I first discovered how uneducated a lot (not all) of our medical professionals are when it comes to **treating back pain**. I was fueled solely on anger to prove them wrong. I was convinced they were all clueless on what really matters and only cared about referring their services, filling up medicine cabinets and operating tables. Years have gone by and I have come to realize it's really us the sufferers who are the uneducated. Doctors are only doing what they are trained and "programmed" to do. Sure every once in awhile you might get some wild hair who goes against the grain and spends more time on the things that matter but I guarantee he/she is looked down on by his peers and the industries "higher-ups". As a fellow back pain sufferer, I am here to tell you, the

responsibility is in our hands. Instead of being a pawn, shuffled around by these doctors, we need to press back and ask questions.

Not being a doctor myself I would never tell someone NOT to have an MRI scan done but what I will say is if you're looking to find a solution to your back pain and your doctor is saying they will be able to find your solution solely off that, it's time you really consider seeing someone else.

## **What is an MRI Scan?**

An MRI or Magnetic Resonance Imaging is radiology technique that uses magnets, radio waves and a computer to capture an image of different structures under the skin. Some MRI scan devices are in the shape of a tube that has a bed that can be sent into the tube for scanning. Other models, I have been scanned by are more claustrophobic friendly, which don't completely enclose your body within a tube. The science behind these strange clicking and banging machines is quite simple. The tube you're sent into or that surrounds you is a giant magnet which creates a strong magnetic field that aligns the protons of hydrogen atoms, which are then exposed to a beam of radio waves. This spins the protons of the body, and they produce a faint signal that is detected by the receiver portion of the MRI scanner. After all that magic, you would think you would have superpowers when you get out. You don't.

## **"MRI scans are over prescribed and their results are given too much weight"**

The problem with the medical industry is that doctors are hinging solely on the results they are getting from these scans. Take a client of mine for example. After spending hundreds of dollars just to get a specialist to review his results the doctors told him that he was going to need a level 2 fusion. No movement assessment or discussion of poor habits that could be keeping him on this chronic pain cycle or anything. They went straight to the fusion. Just a "simple" level 2 fusion that would literally change his life forever (not necessarily for the better).

This happened with me and I know there are thousands of people who are seen by their doctors for basic low back pain who are convinced that they need something major done simply by going off the MRI results alone. You as a back pain sufferer need to know that you have more options. Don't let your doctor convince you that since your discs are a little dark and you have two herniations that the operating table is your best bet!

Paul Ingram over at [painscience.com](http://painscience.com) touches on this topic very well along with a lot more of the supporting science behind the MRI being done for back pain treatment. Check it out!

## **Why MRI scans are not good for diagnosing low back pain.**

The thought process behind the MRI scan is that if they can see physical damage to someone's spine then the doctor will have something to blame the pain on. He/she doesn't have the time or knowledge base to do a movement assessment with them or talk about poor movement habits. It's easier to shuttle you and your insurance card to their scheduling desk and begin another generic diagnosis protocol like all the rest. The problem with this is that the MRI scan isn't going to show the doctor that you work at a desk all day hunched over at a computer screen. It also won't tell the doctor how many times you bend over picking up your kids toys, clothes baskets and pushing the vacuum around the house a day. Those results aren't going to explain to the doctor the years of poor standing mechanics you have developed due to years of muscle imbalances and poor posture.

Instead, these MRI scans will show the doctor a degenerative spine, spinal stenosis and maybe even a disc herniation which will start this over prescribed attempt to "fix it". What drives me crazy is that all this \$500,000 machine does is show the end result from years of accumulating poor habits, postures, and movements over their lifetime. It's like a mechanic replacing the brakes on your car every month. Instead of looking into why your brake pads are wearing out so freakin fast, they just "fix it" and send you on your way. Find out what's causing the brakes to wear out so fast and you will really help someone out! When it comes to back pain, the doctor points to the damage on the MRI results and says AHA, that's why you're in so much pain! Now that we know what's going on, we either cut it out or send you through our time tested therapy protocol that we print from books made in the 60's.

**Getting an MRI scan is not only a foggy way of addressing back pain but it's a sure-fire way to send you into panic mode.**

I was 23 years old when I sat in the office of the most respected spine specialist in my area. He told me that I had a "rupture" of my L5-S1 along with some disc degeneration. From that moment on I blamed all of my pain on that "ruptured disc". It just made sense. It hurt when I bent over because my disc was ruptured and my spine was degenerative. It hurt to roll out of bed because my disc is ruptured and my spine is degenerative. This story I kept telling myself went on and on until I had to physically change the way I spoke about my problem. It's no wonder people are so quick to sign up for surgery and medicated pain management. They are told that their spines are broken and need to be "fixed". Just like you fix a flat tire. Every specialist I went to I proudly carried my MRI scans as if they were a badge of courage proving to whoever looked that my pain was very real and it was all because of what these MRI results showed me.

Man, I wasted so much time thinking this way.

You have to have this same mental shift that I had if you want to find long term relief. You have to stop blaming it on what your MRI results are telling you and start looking deeper. **The MRI results are showing you the aftermath of an accumulation of things done over a long period of time.** If you got an MRI done that's great just don't allow that to be the last nail in your coffin. Immediately seek out people who support what you want for your pain recovery. If you want to be on medication and have surgery after surgery then join one of these groups you find on Reddit or Facebook. Nobody talks about what they can do to stop the pain cycle. They just talk about what medications they are allowed to mix and who has the worst surgery story. We have to break this cycle.

## When are MRI scans useful?

With just about any one of my clients. I ALWAYS want to see some kind of medical diagnosis of what their trusted medical professional is telling them is the issue. Most of these come in the form of X-Rays and MRI's and that's totally fine. It's almost better in a sense because it's proof that they did actually go get a doctor's opinion.

There are more and more studies and clinical recommendations being published on this exact topic. Most doctors will normally send anyone with lower back pain to get an MRI done to rule any major damage out. Which I agree with if all they are doing it for is to RULE OUT any major issues. According to American College of Physicians and The American Pain Society MRI scans really should only be used in worst case scenarios.

There are some cases where back pain is so severe that the patient can hardly sit, stand or walk, their legs have gone numb or have completely lost control of their bowels. This is a great example of when a scan can be extremely helpful. They allow the doctor to look into the patient's body and see what is going on with the structure of the spine to help pinpoint the best course of action. Again, this is NOT the case for the majority of back pain sufferers. In these rare, emergency situations the MRI machine is your friend.

**Don't stop here. The most important thing you could do for your recovery is to diligently work towards getting yourself OFF the pain cycle you're on.**

**There are no secrets, no gadgets or special sauces to getting relief. You have to work and you have to be consistent.**

**You won't miss a single post that makes it onto the website. I'll hand deliver everything I create right to your inbox. Be looking out for some awesome stuff!**

**Talk to you soon,**

**William**