

Taking the First Step

The first step in getting the right treatment for your back or neck problem is simple—a good diagnosis from a spine expert. Back



or neck pain can be caused by a number of conditions, some temporary, others chronic, but treatable. A good diagnosis is the key to beginning an effective treatment plan.

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Take Control

Making an appointment today is the first step in taking control of your pain. Get a good diagnosis so you can get started on an effective treatment plan!



Give us a call for information about our free seminars: (909) 335-5574



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Back & Neck Pain Getting a Good Diagnosis



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Signs and Symptoms



Signs and symptoms for different back or neck problems can be confusing, and a good diagnosis can be difficult to pin down. That is why seeing a spine specialist is a

crucial first step. Pain can come from many structures of the spine including muscles, ligaments, nerves, discs and bone. For example, pain may be felt in the knee and come from the lower back. Similarly, pain in the arm or shoulder can be a sign of a problem in the neck. A spine specialist can provide a thorough exam and recommend the proper diagnostic tests to pinpoint your particular problem.

Common Causes of Back & Neck Pain

Back and neck pain are, unfortunately, very common. Most people will experience an episode at least at some point in their lives. Here are some common causes:

Lumbar Muscle Pain—The most common cause of back pain is muscle strain in the lower back. The good news is most episodes of back pain from muscle strains resolve completely within a few weeks.

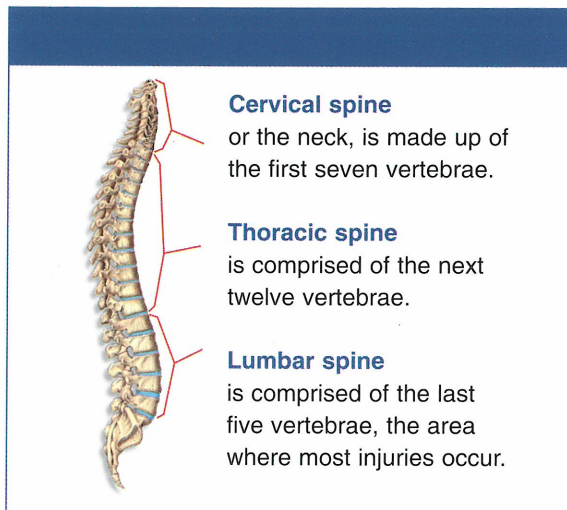
Disc Herniation—The disc between the vertebrae protrudes into the spinal canal causing pressure on nerves; this can occur in the neck, as well as the back.

Degenerative Disc Disease—Degenerative disc disease is part of the natural process of growing older. As we age, our discs lose some of their flexibility, elasticity and shock absorbing characteristics. Sometimes these changes can cause problems including leg pain, back pain and weakness.

Spinal Stenosis—As we age, the spinal canal can become narrower from arthritis and other conditions. If the canal gets too constricted, back and leg pain can result.

Spondylolisthesis—Spondylolisthesis is the term to describe adjacent vertebrae that are unstable and are “slipping” against each other. This can be a result of degenerative changes in the spine that result in a loss of normal stabilizing structures. The unstable vertebrae can be a source of back and leg pain.

Arthritis—Arthritis can affect any joint in the body. It is more common the knees, hips, and fingers, but it can also affect the small joints in the back and neck.



Cervical spine

or the neck, is made up of the first seven vertebrae.

Thoracic spine

is comprised of the next twelve vertebrae.

Lumbar spine

is comprised of the last five vertebrae, the area where most injuries occur.

Your Role

A good diagnosis is very important in getting pain relief. You play an important role in this by making an appointment with one of our spine specialists. During your visit, the specialist will take a general medical history and ask you several questions about your particular pain.

Think about how to describe your pain when answering these questions:

- What are you doing when it hurts the most?
- How long have you had the pain?
- Was there an injury that started the pain?
- Is the pain sharp? Dull? Nagging? Achy?
- Does it travel up and down your leg?
- What seems to help the pain?



Bring along a list of medications you are currently taking. Be sure to include the strength and how often you take them. Include any over-the-counter medications, nutritional supplements or vitamins you are taking. If you have tried pain medications that didn't help, mention those too.