



Chronic Low Back Pain
We have worked hard to create this
Yoga Application
A long-term investment into your wellness

By

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1.0 We have worked hard to create Chronic Low Back Pain (CLBP) – How?

1.1 Chronic Low Back Pain – A fairly new entry in our living space

Low back pain is perhaps one of the leading causes of visiting the physician today. From school going kids to an office going middle aged person to a senior citizen, all are victim of this condition. Revisiting my childhood, I can hardly recollect any such complaint from anyone at home in my own big joint family or from the neighboring surroundings as meeting and chatting with them almost every day, then, was as common as spending time with our gazettes today.

This definitely calls for the question – What could have happened in last decade or few decades that has changed the equation of society in this way.

1.2 Increased Comfort = Increased STRESS = Decreased Wellness

Human brain has been able to reach the pinnacle of technology, to the extent, that **the whole life can be comfortably spent around 'just a press of button'**. This automatically applies that the movements in our day today life has also reduced to just 'a press of button.' (Note that CLBP is still a part of urban life. Rural areas, where activities and natural living makes a predominant part of human life, still remains untouched from this problem).

1.3 Comfort at what cost?

City lifestyle has percolated into our system so deep that it is beginning to shake the natural constitution of our body without us even noticing that. By the time, we become aware of that, it has developed its own comfortable structure and at that juncture, needs incessant diligent efforts to reverse to its natural form. New developments bring in its stride all these psychosomatic problems – CLBP being just one of those.

The problem of backpain can range from just a nagging pain to a bed bound condition. It can be a simple discomfort at the minor level or a complete mental and physical dependence at its highest flare. Whatever be the case, its affect is directly felt on our wellbeing. Though it may look physical at the gross level but indirectly disturbs our mental peace as well.

1.3.1 It all begins at childhood

It no more comes as a shock to me to witness my clients running around the schools for the admission of their toddlers. The baby is barely around 6 months then. The reason given - getting admission in the choice of their school is a big challenge. Poor kids are made to start their school career, at times, only at the age of 1.5 years. Here begins the foundation of



their postural misalignment, at such a tender age, with 'one locked position' with chairs and tables.

At the time of our growing years, schooling started at the age of six. Before that, the only job we had to do - play as much as possible (only in physical form), eat as and when you are hungry & sleep whenever and wherever you can. Outdoor activities in its various forms was more than enough to twist & turn, stretch & contract as well as lengthen and strengthen our body in multiple ways. The body had gone through different movements to be ready to embrace the upcoming requirement.

Our kids of today may not possibly attend to so many movements given their engagement with schools, introduction to gazettes at tender age, lack of outdoor activities etc.

1.3.2 It carries in our schools& colleges

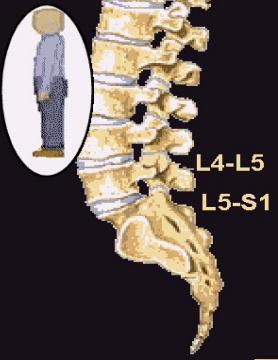

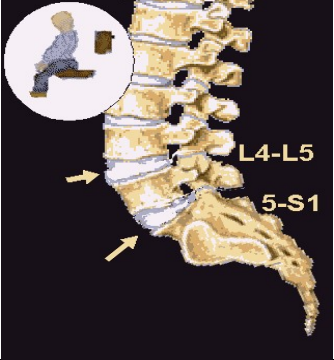
As we move from play school to proper school to colleges, nothing much has changed in terms of our connection with the chair and table as such. Of course, the dependence has increased on those tools along with the long hours of studies. As body was not naturally designed to sit for long hours and as we have almost limited ourselves to indoor comfort mostly with our gadgets which is again sedentary in nature, we automatically slip into comfort sitting or using various lying down positions to carry on our activities, thereby, moving from tables and chairs to soft beds and pillows. ***The postural misalignment which would have begun at playschool start making a foothold at this stage of life.***

1.3.3 Even workspace is not spared of it

The same is now transferred at our workplace –with further increased hours of sitting and screen exposure. Of course, the wooden or simple chair would have upgraded to leather chair with much more comfort this time, allowing movement in various directions. Natural corollary – Muscular Imbalance – Leading to an Imbalanced Lifestyle).

1.3.4 Congratulations! backpain has manifested in full swing

Backpain has become chronic and absolutely not ready to take a back seat this time. We are forced to attend to it now. The first response is looking for the easiest option available which ends with seeking medical attention. In fact, medical involvement at this stage could be the right choice as CLBP may have in a full flared up state. But then, this can be just a short-term solution and not something which will burn the root of the problem. If ignored again followed by the previous lifestyle, we may be ready to die with CLBP.

Table: Immediate Effects of Office Chair Sitting on the Lumbar Spine		
<p>Picture of the Standing Spine. Note the Normal Lumbar Curve. This spine is in balance with the weight spread evenly over the whole surface of the disc and facet joints.</p>	<p>Picture of the tall person's spine while office chair sitting. Lumbar flexion has occurred at the Lowest Intervertebral Joints (L4-L5 and L5-S1). The discs are opened and stretched toward the back, and this habitual positioning makes the discs weakest at the point where they are most likely to rupture.</p>	<p>Picture of short person's spine while office chair sitting. Note the extra curve at the base of the spine. Lumbar extension has occurred at L4-L5 and L5-S1. The facet joints are being compressed together at the back, and the siatic nerve may be pinched.</p>
		
<p>Source: http://www.easyvigour.net.nz/fitness/h_Chair_Sit2.htm</p>		

2.0 What's the big deal?

This is a normal reaction of new generation on CLBP. This is most probably because they have learned to live with it. It does not seem something non-normal.

2.1 Sitting is INJURIOUS to WELLBEING

Glance into your recent past may be few decades back. Sitting for hours was never a practice but multiple activities definitely was. Our body was never designed to sit for long



hours. But our lifestyle pushed it to do so. As a result of constant forced sitting, our postural alignment starts molding into misalignment finally brings in its wake series of muscular imbalance.

2.1.1 Structure of the chair

In order to bring comfort to long hour sitting, chair seemed a viable option. The early chairs designed for the purpose, however, were very much in synch with the natural requirement. It used to be wooden mostly and were designed in a way that sitting became an independent action involving our core and back in equal proportion. Also, usage of chair was scattered and not a way of life then. It was used sparingly as and when absolutely required. Majority of the activities were earthbound in nature.

With time, the usage of chair increased by lips and bounds from our office to school to play school to our dining area, to the extent, that sitting on the floor has almost become an extinct in city dwelling today. Increased usage of chair necessitated increased comfort. Chair designs took a revolutionary stance in terms of forms, shapes and materials with single headed goal - 'COMFORT'. Increased comfort sitting allowed us to throw ourselves onto it to merge into its comfy setting, leaving the core and back unused. Our poor back and core not only began to lose its elasticity and strength but in the process, also began to tread on the path of suffering.

The second element which is equally important to note is the height of the chair. The chairs available in the market are standard in height which is used by all, irrespective of the height and the weight. For some, it could be the best fit. But for others, it is an adjusted arrangement which has its own repercussion.

With prolonged sitting firstly and with comfortable chair especially not meant for your height, you are continuously disturbing the natural curve of your spine.

2.1.2 Constant sitting leads to constant forward bend

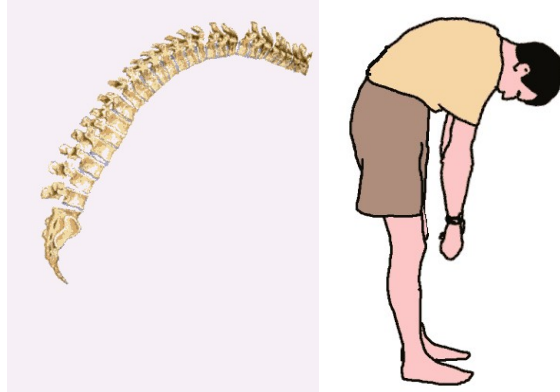
Forward bend is automatically followed with prolonged sitting. Sitting in the school, college, office, we are leaning forward to write or to work on our laptop. Even in our leisure time, we are with our cell phone in bending forward position. What does it lead to?

Misalignment of our spinal curve

The frontal part of the spine is in constant compressed state whereas the back of the spine is in constant lengthened mode making the front stiff whereas the back loose. In simple terms, this has thrown the natural curve of our spine out of alignment leading to all the psycho somatic problems possible as our spine is an integral part of Nervous System.

Diagrams illustrate the forward bend of a habitually chair sitting man

Note the increased flexion just below the waist (the point of origin of the sciatic nerve), and also the excessive flex (kyphosis) of the lower chest region.



http://www.easyvigour.net.nz/fitness/h_Chair_Sit2.htm

We had been talking of lower back pain until now but even the upper part of the spine is not spared of it. Lower part misalignment has directly impacted the upper area. The common problem associated with this are cervical spondylosis, frozen shoulder and yes, reduced lung capacity as your chest is in constricted state, not allowing the breathing to operate in its natural slow and deep rhythm.

Please note that the assumed chair position automatically gets transferred into all our non-chair activities. It means if we have habitually developed postural misalignment over a period of time and we are in the same distorted posture 24/7 no matter what we do.

2.1.3 No backbend

It may be easy to keep this problem under control if we make backbend a part of our regular practice. **Backward bend or back bend can help align the misaligned spine and counteract the problem in a systematic manner.** But backbend not being a natural movement, we find it difficult to even think about it.

2.1.4 No physical activity

Icing to the cake is our sedentary lifestyle where we have almost bid goodbye to different activities of day to day life. This trend has begun from our childhood only. By the time we reach office, sports / activities seem like a childish act only hence absolutely no movement.



3.0 Yoga Application

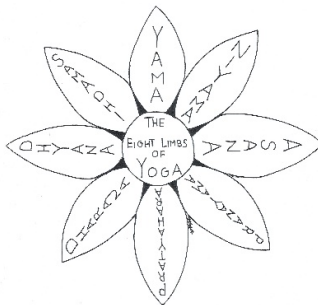
3.1 A long-term Investment into your WELLNESS

3.1.1 Yoga is multidimensional

Yoga as a science, art and philosophy is multifaceted in nature. Following Yoga in its entirety encompasses our personality in its entirety as well. The eight limbs of Ashtanga Yoga correspond to the eight aspects of our personality. Following these limbs in its entirety flourishes multiple aspect of us in its depth and thereby guides us tread forward with complete awareness where these different aspects merges into one. ***It integrates our scattered self into one and guides us onto the path of spiritual destination where the self and the seer merges into each other.***

3.1.2 Postural alignment alone can do the wonder

Majority part of the problems faced by us, is psycho somatic in nature, with its main source being "STRESS". STRESS, however, is not something which ushers overnight. It is combination of different factors which gets accumulated over a period of time for hours, months and years. It does keep giving signals during its period of accumulation which are mostly ignored flatly. In lack of attendance and unable to find a vent out route, the accumulated stress eventually starts manifesting like a volcano in an aggressive manner.



The beginning of this outburst is somewhere sourced in our 'Postural Misalignment' which has taken graduated onto a completely different level. If only we can take care of the way we stand, the way we sit, the way we walk, we will have a completely different story to share.

3.1.3 These asanas can ease the pain

3.1.3.1 Step 1

The following 5 postures can help ease out the chronic condition:

MatsyaKridasana

1. Lie down on your right side with your legs stretched straight on the floor and resting on top of each other; right hand is stretched up above your head along the floor; right ear is resting on your right arm; right palm is resting on the floor; left hand is resting on your body.



2. Bend your left knee; bring it close to the chest and let it rest on the floor close to your body; move right side of your chest on the floor by sliding your right armpit out; the upper part of the body turns over a little; basically, right side of your chest is on the floor; your right arm has moved a little back and your right cheek is on the floor by now.



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3. Bend both the elbows; left elbow is resting on the floor in front of your chest and close to your left knee; right elbow is pointing out above your head; both the palms are resting on each other near your right ear and your right cheek is resting on these stacked hands; make yourself comfortable by adjusting the posture.
4. Be in the posture for 3-5 minutes with normal breathing; change the side and follow the same sequence. You can check the video of this posture on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLoTRZSX0-ESpIrr067jMf9wYOz-6utuj9&v=emzpbPKnU-c>

Marjarasan

1. Get down on your fours (both the palms and knees on the floor); palms are in line with the shoulders; knees are in line with the thighs; toes are stretching out or tucked in.
2. Drop your lower back down to the floor; inhale and start lengthening the frontal part of your spine starting from the navel to the chest, to the chin and finally the crown so that your head moves backward along with rest of the upper part of the body.
3. Exhale and get your chin to the chest, drop your hips down towards the floor and curve your upper back as up as possible.
4. Continue to perform the above movements alternatively for 5-10 rounds.
5. Relax in Shashankasana



Vyagrasana

1. Get down on your fours. Stretch your right leg at the back so that it is parallel to the floor. Bend your right knee from the back and your head from the front (you are trying to get your head and toes close to each other)
2. Exhale and bring your head and bent knee in close to your chest.
3. Repeat 5 rounds and change to the other side. You can check the video of this asana on: <http://www.shammisyogalaya.com/subvideo.aspx?id=7>



Pawanmuktasana

1. Lie down on your back
2. Bend your right knee and place your right thigh on the chest
3. Wrap your arms around your bent leg
4. Hold the position for 20-30 seconds with normal breathing
5. Release and repeat on the other side.



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Note

You can choose to bend your left knee and place your left foot on the floor in case of discomfort.

SuptaPadanghusthasana Variation

1. Lie down on your back
2. Raise your right leg up towards the ceiling and move it to the left side
3. Turn your head to the right
4. You can hold your right leg with the left hand or can use a belt or dupaata to keep your leg in place.
5. Repeat to the other side for the same length of time.
- 6.



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Note: Slowly keep flexing your toes in and stretch your heel out to optimize the stretch at the back of the leg.

It is important to assess the severity of the problem first. If you feel you will be able to perform these postures without much discomfort, practice 3-5 rounds of these 2-3 times a day for 15 days. This should help settle the pain.



3.1.3.2 Step 2: Once you have a normal back, work on strengthening it

Once you have a control of the problem at its chronic level, it is advisable to work on the foundation so as to prevent the recurrence of the same. Asanas like **ArdhaShalabhasana, Bhujangasana, Ushtrasana, Dhanurasana** etc. should help progress in this direction. Check the complete list of back strengthening asanas on: <http://www.shammisyogalaya.com/yogaasana.aspx?id=9>

In satirical terms, we have worked hard in creating this condition. Increased comfort is eventually leading to decreased wellness. As a result, discomfort is dwelling with us day and night. Needless to mention, even the slightest physical discomfort has the power to hold our mind on to it, thereby sub-optimizing our performance no matter what. Then guess the quality of performance when something becomes so chronic in nature.

Yoga, in its entirety, has a life transforming effect. But that might seem like a daunting task to many, given the hustle bustle of our fast-paced life. The best news – following even a tiny part of the ocean, called Yoga, can have profound impact on your wellbeing. Being watchful about your postural alignment alone can put an end to ‘Chronic Low Back Pain’. Adding few more minutes of practice can almost eliminate it from your life. In summary, an elementary endeavor of just correcting one’s postural alignment can do wonders for eliminating lower back pain. And then, further regular practice will vanish this affliction from our being.

Live a Pain-Free life
Discover Yoga Discover Yourself