



# **THE BACKSTRONG RESET**

**A SMARTER WAY TO  
UNDERSTAND AND  
MOVE THROUGH BACK  
PAIN**

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## INTRODUCTION: YOU'RE NOT BROKEN— YOU'RE JUST OPERATING ON OLD INFO

Back pain is incredibly common. It can show up after long hours sitting at a desk, during a workout, or even while getting out of bed. But often, what's worse than the pain is the confusion that follows. You've likely heard things like:

- "Your disc is herniated."
- "Your back is out of alignment."
- "Just stop lifting and rest."

These phrases may sound convincing, but they often promote fear and create the belief that your body is fragile and untrustworthy. Here's the truth: You're not broken. You're not fragile. You're just working with outdated information (McGill, 2015).

This guide exists to reset that mindset. You'll learn to understand your pain, move smarter, and rebuild strength using science-based strategies. Let's begin.



## CHAPTER 1: WHY BACK PAIN IS SO COMMON.

Low back pain affects up to 80% of adults at some point in life (Balagué et al., 2012). It's rarely due to a single traumatic event. Instead, it stems from modern lifestyle patterns—excessive sitting, deconditioning, repetitive stress, and psychosocial factors (O'Sullivan et al., 2016).

Why most people hurt:

- We sit more than we move.
- We train hard but recover poorly.
- We treat pain with rest instead of rebuilding.

This cycle of flare-ups and short-term fixes keeps people stuck. The BackStrong Reset addresses this through improved load tolerance, motor control, and nervous system regulation (McGill, 2015).

**"Back pain isn't a life sentence—it's a signal. Not to stop moving, but to start moving smarter."— Eldridge Abat**





## CHAPTER 2: COMMON MYTHS THAT HOLD YOU BACK

### **Myth 1: *"You need to rest until it goes away."***

While rest may offer temporary relief, long-term inactivity delays healing and leads to weakness, fear, and disability (van Tulder et al., 2000).

### **Myth 2: *"Pain equals damage."***

Pain is a message from the nervous system, not always a sign of tissue damage. Studies show structural changes like disc degeneration are common even in people without symptoms (Brinjikji et al., 2015).

### **Myth 3: *"Just stretch it out."***

Stretching might relieve tension temporarily, but back issues often require motor control, core endurance, and strength—especially in the hips and trunk (McGill, 2015).

### **Myth 4: *"If you have back pain, you should avoid lifting."***

Truth is, avoiding lifting altogether can lead to more harm than good. When done properly, lifting is not dangerous—it's a skill that can actually protect and strengthen your spine. Research shows that graded exposure to lifting and loading improves back function and reduces fear (O'Sullivan et al., 2016). The problem isn't lifting—it's how you're lifting, what you're lifting, and whether your body is prepared for it.



## CHAPTER 3: THE POWER OF LANGUAGE AND THE NOCEBO EFFECT

Words matter. What you hear about your body shapes how you think, feel, and move.

Being told your spine is “deteriorating” or “misaligned” can sound scary—but often, these phrases create more harm than clarity. They fuel fear, tension, and the belief that your body is fragile. This is known as the nocebo effect: when negative language and expectations increase symptoms and sensitivity (Moseley, 2007).

Instead of:

*“You’ve got the spine of a 70-year-old.”*

Try:

*“Your spine has adapted over time—and we can help it adapt again through smart movement.”*

We believe in using language that empowers—not limits. Because the way we talk about pain plays a major role in how we recover from it.



## CHAPTER 4: YOU'RE NORMAL, NOT BROKEN

Back pain is like lactose intolerance—it's not about damage, it's about how your body reacts to certain stressors. The key is to identify your triggers and build a movement strategy that works around them.

You're not broken. You just need a better plan.

Many people panic when they hear terms like “disc bulge” or “facet arthritis” on an MRI. But these are common findings, even in people with no pain (Brinjikji et al., 2015).

**“YOU ARE NOT BROKEN—YOU'RE  
JUST RESPONDING TO STRESS IN  
A WAY YOUR BODY CAN'T YET  
HANDLE. THAT'S NOT A FLAW.  
THAT'S A SIGNAL TO REBUILD.”-  
ELDRIDGE**



## CHAPTER 5: FINDING THE REAL PAIN DRIVERS

Most low back pain comes down to three variables:

- Motion (certain movements hurt)
- Posture (certain positions irritate)
- Load (stress or weight makes it worse)

By identifying which combination of these factors affect you, we can reduce irritation and rebuild tolerance (Cook, 2010).

**“UNDERSTANDING WHAT DRIVES A PERSON’S PAIN EXPERIENCE—RATHER THAN JUST TREATING THE SYMPTOMS—IS WHAT LEADS TO LASTING CHANGE.”**

**– DR. PETER O’SULLIVAN**



## **CHAPTER 6: YOUR MOST UNDERRATED REHAB TOOL-WALKING**

One of the most underused tools for spine health? Walking. Walking activates the glutes, obliques, lats, QL, and deep stabilizers—creating a rhythm that decompresses the spine and restores function (McGill, 2015).

Walking Tips:

- Chest tall, eyes forward
- Swing arms from the shoulder
- Walk briskly, not sluggishly
- Start with 10–15 minutes, twice a day.

**"WALKING IS NATURE'S  
BACK BALM." – DR.  
STUART MCGILL**





## CHAPTER 7: BRACE UP—DON'T LOCK

### UP

When you brace, you're engaging your core muscles to protect your spine, especially when you're lifting, twisting, or even getting out of bed.

1. Think about someone getting ready to tap your stomach. You'd naturally tighten your belly in response. That's the feeling we want, but instead of sucking in, you want to push your stomach out.
2. Push your stomach outward, not inward. Imagine you're trying to fill your shirt with air, expanding your whole abdomen. This activates your core and helps protect your lower back.

3. You can use a resistance band around your waist to feel the bracing even more. As you push against the band, your core will naturally tighten all the way around, giving you more stability.

So, before lifting or twisting, make sure you're bracing your core to keep your back safe. Bracing builds stability without rigidity (Hodges & Richardson, 1996).



## CHAPTER 8: THE QUESTIONS THAT GUIDE EVERYTHING

We start by asking better questions:

1. **Do you have good and bad days?**
  - If yes: Your pain is mechanical and changeable (Nicholas et al., 2011).
2. **Do you know what triggers it?**
  - Patterns help us personalize your plan.
3. **What makes it feel better?**
  - Walking? Bracing? That's data we use to design your reset.

**“Asking the right questions is the beginning of healing. When we shift from 'what's wrong with me?' to 'what patterns are contributing to my pain?'—we begin to reclaim control.” – Dr. Peter O'Sullivan**



## CHAPTER 9: THE BACKSTRONG RESET FRAMEWORK

This framework is designed to help you move past fear and into resilience. However, it's just that—a framework. Everyone's journey is different. For a more tailored plan and coaching support, reach out directly for personalized assessment and guidance at [www.movestrong.ca](http://www.movestrong.ca)

### **Daily Spine Hygiene:**

- Light bracing + walking
- Breathing drills
- Frequent posture resets

### **Trigger Awareness:**

- Identify what aggravates pain
- Swap destructive patterns for spine-friendly ones

### **Strength Training (2–3x/week):**

- Anti-rotation, anti-extension drills
- Hips, glutes, and lat training
- Gradual load exposure

### **Mindset Check-ins:**

- "Am I guarding or growing?"
- "Am I moving with intention?"

*Pain is replaced—not by rest—but by smart strength, coaching, and movement.*





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Eldridge Abat, MSc. Kinesiology, CSCS**  
**Founder of MoveStrong Health & Performance**  
**Strength Coach. Rehab Specialist. Athlete. Dad.**

With over 20 years of experience in Strength & Conditioning, rehab, and workplace injury prevention, I built the BackStrong Program to help people move powerfully—not fearfully. No matter your profession or lifestyle, my goal is to help you build a back that supports the life you want to live—I'm here to help you build a back that works for your life.



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