

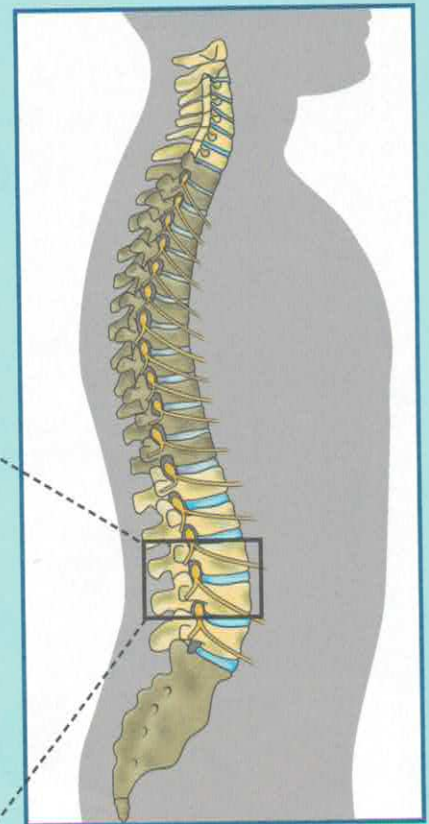
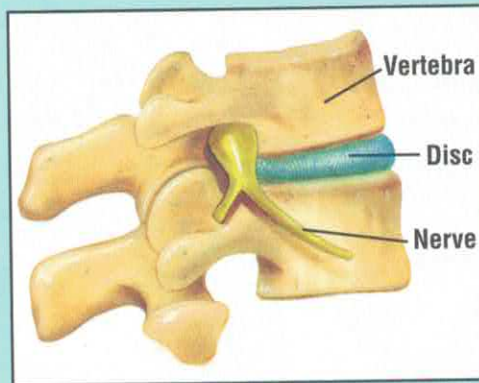
Chiropractic Health

SPINAL DEGENERATION

Years of stress and too much use and abuse can cause your spine to **degenerate**, or wear out. Joint inflammation (**arthritis**) may result. Joints may also lose alignment and discs can wear down. And you may start to feel pain and stiffness. Your chiropractor can design a program of adjustments and self-care for you. This can help slow or even stop the process of degeneration.

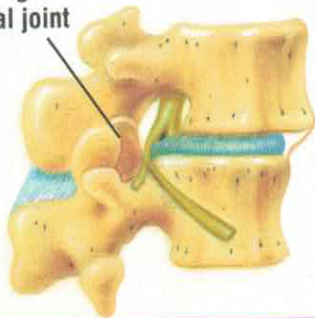
A Healthy Spine

Your spine is made up of bones (**vertebrae**), cushions between the bones (**discs**), and soft tissues (**muscles and ligaments**). Your spine supports the weight of your body. When no single part of the spine has to do too much work, bones, discs, and soft tissues stay healthy and pain-free.



A Degenerating Spine

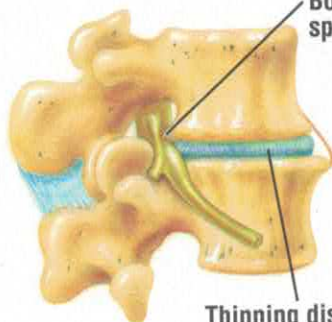
Misaligned spinal joint



Misaligned Joint

A spinal joint is where two vertebrae meet. Poor posture, strain, and injury can push a joint out of line. Then vertebrae don't move as they should. Discs and muscles are stressed. Nerves may be pinched and irritated.

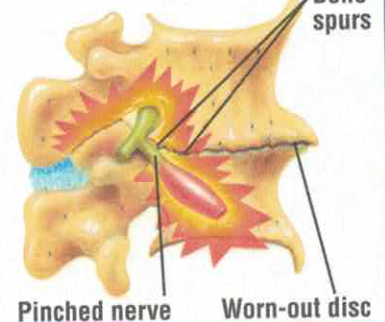
Bone spur



Early Degeneration

With repeated stress, a disc wears down. **Bone spurs** (bony growths) may develop. Muscles and other soft tissues may stretch unevenly. Nerves may be irritated and painful.

Bone spurs



Advanced Degeneration

If the disc thins further, the nerves can become pinched. The vertebrae begin to fuse, or stick together. Pain may be severe, and your ability to move may be greatly reduced. Lasting numbness may result.

Exercise Your Spine

Exercises can help stretch, strengthen, and align your spine. Your chiropractor may suggest one or more of the exercises on this sheet. He or she may also give you other exercises to do. Be careful to do the exercises right. Do them as often as you're told. If you feel pain, stop the exercise and call your chiropractor.

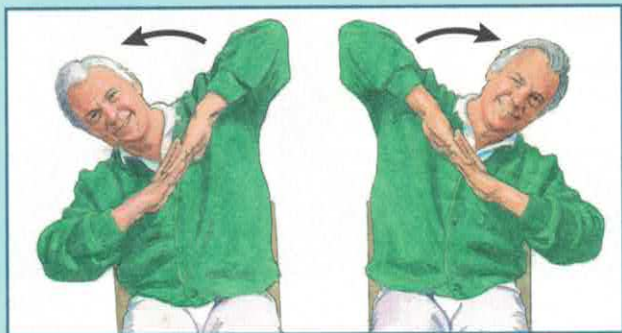
Spinal Molding

- Lie on the floor or on a firm mattress.
- Place rolled-up towels under your neck and low back.
- Lie in this position for _____ minutes.
- Repeat _____ times a day.



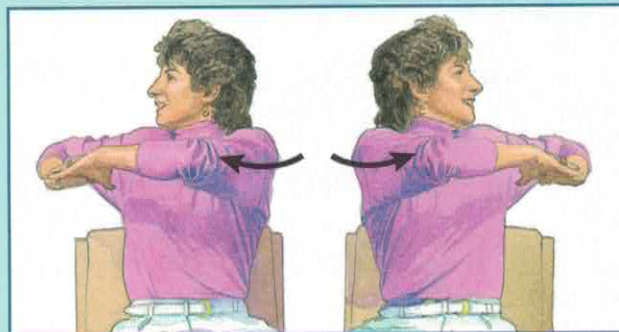
Side Bend

- Lace your fingers together in front of you. Point your elbows outward.
- Bending at the waist, tilt your body to one side as far as you can. Bend your head and neck in the same direction.
- Repeat _____ times on each side.
- Repeat _____ times a day.



Sit and Twist

- Lace your fingers together in front of you. Point your elbows outward.
- Slowly and gently twist at your waist. At the same time, turn your head and neck to the same side.
- Repeat _____ times on each side.
- Repeat _____ times a day.



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