

WORKINGwell FOR LIFE

A complimentary newsletter from WorkingWell Solutions of Sheboygan

920-207-2740 • info@workingwellsolutions.com • www.workingwellsolutions.com

TIP OF THE MONTH

An innovative
physical therapy
technique may
relieve back pain
even when
all other
treatments fail.

Workingwell Solutions is a Sheboygan-based company offering a variety of job-site programs to assist with injury prevention and loss control. These services are designed to reduce worker's compensation costs and employee absenteeism while improving overall health, productivity, and job satisfaction. Our programs are customized to meet the individual needs of each company we serve. We look forward to working well with you.

THE ANSWER TO BACK PAIN MIGHT NOT BE SURGERY

I've been a physical therapist for over 25 years. During that time I've seen amazing technological advances in the area of evaluating and diagnosing various medical problems. Physicians don't need to rely simply on x-rays; there are MRI scans (magnetic resonance imaging), CT scans (computerized tomography), and PET scans (Positron emission tomography), which allow them to look even closer to identify a variety of problems. This has helped the medical profession greatly, but it has also caused a new dilemma: How to treat a patient after these sophisticated tests find something wrong. Oftentimes it is assumed that the patient is unable to help himself.

Here's an example. Many people imagine that most instances of neck and back pain are caused by herniated discs. When a person finds out that he actually does have a herniated disc, he no longer feels able to solve his back pain problems on his own. Because he's been told that it's a "mechanical" problem, he feels it is beyond his ability to fix. But here's something that might surprise you: **Back pain and herniated discs are not typically related.** Studies show that many people without back pain have been found to have herniated discs. So when someone goes to a doctor with back pain and is told – after diagnostic testing – that he has a herniated disc, it isn't necessarily the cause of his pain. But the diagnosis of "herniated disc" is the only thing the person hears. He becomes passive and decides there is nothing that can be done to help him except surgery.

The same is true of osteoarthritis (degenerative arthritis). Nearly everyone over the age of 70 has some degree of osteoarthritis, as do many people over the age of 50. This doesn't mean that nothing short of surgery can relieve the pain. In fact, many people without painful symptoms have evidence of osteoarthritis.

So what's the answer? While sometimes symptoms are severe enough to require surgery, in many cases a trial of physical therapy will help restore normal mobility and strength to the area, while relieving traces of pain. Ask your doctor about non-surgical alternatives if you experience back pain or arthritic pain. Other solutions may be simpler, less invasive, and more economical.

STAT OF THE MONTH

**Most adults —
as many as eight
or nine in 10 —
experience low
back pain at
some point in
their lives.**