



Treating Neck and Back Pain

By Blake Rossi, PT, DPT, OCS, ATC

Lower back and neck pain can be very common complaints throughout our lifetimes. Pain can range from dull, annoying pain, to severe disabling pain in the lower back. Pain in the back of the neck can be acute, which comes on suddenly and intensely, or chronic, which can last for weeks, months, or even years.

A very important aspect of spine health is the ability to adequately stabilize your spine. Most patients I evaluate ask how your abdominals or core help to stabilize the spine. My analogy is a soda can. If you have an empty can without any blemishes in the walls, the can will support quite a bit of weight. This is a great way to think about how to stabilize your spine adequately. Our diaphragm (respiratory muscle) is the top of the can, pelvic floor musculature is the bottom, and your abdominals are the side walls of the can. Our abdominals wrap from the back of your spine to the front of your pelvis and work along with the deep stabilizers of our spine for a cylindrical effect around our spine. When all of these muscles are properly coordinated, (along with breathing) the spine is properly supported from all angles.

Physical therapists are trained to evaluate movement patterns of the spine, including strength and coordination, motor control and mobility, and body mechanics of the neck and back. Each and every patient is thoroughly evaluated and a specific treatment plan



is designed after evaluation. The earlier you can get a referral to physical therapy to address movement, strength, flexibility and mobility, the earlier you can receive treatment.

When a physical therapist assesses how well you are stabilizing your spine, they include looking at how well you use your diaphragm, pelvic floor, and abdominals for strength, coordination and stability. Many times people with low back or neck pain are deficient in stabilizing their spine. In physical therapy, we address these deficits and offer solutions to better stabilize your spine.

If you have recently been experiencing low back pain, mid back pain, or neck pain, talk to your primary care physician or call to schedule an appointment with Mammoth Hospital's Physical Therapy clinic and Orthopedic Institute in Bishop. Our physical therapists are extensively trained in the evaluation, treatment and management of back and neck pain and can offer treatment plans to start getting appropriate care from your first appointment. You will be evaluated by one of our orthopedic providers in conjunction with a physical therapist to address your neck and low back pain. It's our goal to find the best solution, to be applied at the best time, for each patient.