

6 Tips to becoming pain free



How to use this booklet?

These tips are not meant to be applied all at once. This is because they introduce some basic principles that take time to apply to our daily lives and, over time, we can absorb these and observe what is happening to our bodies as we become more bodily aware.

6 simple Tips towards
eliminating Back Pain

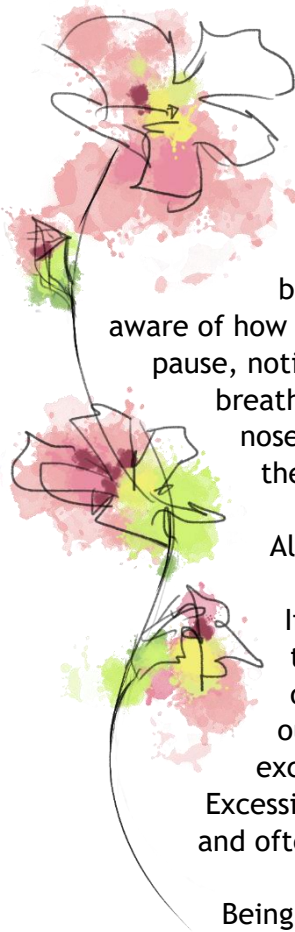


**KEEP
CALM
AND
HAVE GOOD
POSTURE**

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Tip 1 Pausing and learning to observe



Everyone knows that being stressed results in us holding tension in our body but I ask you - are we aware of how much. Just take a moment to pause, noticing our breathing. Allow the breath to come in and out of our nose. Notice the rise and fall of the chest with each breath.

Already feeling calmer?

If you are then great. This is the first stage in learning to observe what is going on in our body. Learning to release excessive muscular tension.
Excessive muscular tension = pain and often a lot of it.

Being calm, having less muscular tension = less pain & improved

postural tone.

Postural tone improves as we learn to release the muscles that we are using unnecessarily and the postural muscles start to become stronger.

Tip 2 Lying down (semi - supine)

This is probably one of the best ways to reduce lower back pain and was a real light bulb moment for me when I started having Alexander Technique lessons.

Lie down on the floor with your head supported by some paperback books say about 2 inches high, to make it more comfortable fold a tea towel and place this on top of the books.

Have your legs straight then bend your knees as in



the picture and see what happens to your lower back - you will probably find that it is much more comfortable with your knees bent as it allows your pelvis and lower back to meet the floor.

Try lying down like this for 15 minutes per day.

To get up off the floor. Roll over onto all fours and then use a chair to help you get back up to standing. Think of your head leading you up to standing as you unfold to your full height.

After doing this for a few days try these tips on releasing tension while lying down.

Tip 3 Letting go while lying down (semi - supine)

I hope you have had a go at lying down semi - supine. What did you feel like when you got up? Did you feel like you had relaxed a bit and let go of muscular tension?

If not here are some extra tips to help you:

- Notice the support of the surface you are lying on. Ideally this should be a carpeted floor not a bed.
- Notice which parts of your body have more contact with the floor / books - your head, shoulders, hips & finally your feet.
- Notice your breathing. Your mouth should be closed and your tongue should rest

behind the lower teeth. Notice the breath gently flowing through the nostrils to the back of the nose and beyond.

- Think of your knees pointing towards the ceiling as though on a piece of string. Think of the knees coming away from the lower back.
- Don't try to feel any of these things just observe. We are learning to observe and let go and be in the present moment.



Tip 4 Learning to let go

The power of "thinking"

In our busy lives we tend to get stressed and this results in muscular tension which we then hold in our bodies for minutes, hours days or in some cases years. It then can just take one small act where we react to a situation unconsciously and we end up with a bad back. For example, a gentleman recently came for Alexander Technique Lessons with me after doing a good deed where he assisted someone who had come off their bike. This act of lifting caused major damage to his back and he ended up having spinal surgery. It probably wasn't the act of lifting the bike that caused the damage to his back but the culmination of previous activities throughout his very active life. This why he has decided to take Alexander Technique lessons as he wishes to avoid further injuries to his back and to learn how to carry out activities in a less damaging way.

In learning the Alexander Technique we are learning to act in a more conscious way.

I have already explained some methods of learning to release muscular tension but we are also learning to think before acting.

Thinking is very important as it breaks old patterns and habits. If we carry on with the same old bad habits we will eventually suffer in the form of pain.

Here's a little exercise to try. Clench your fist really hard, then just think of releasing the tension in your hand. Allow your hand to open out and imagine the palm of your hand opening out and your fingers lengthening. Notice any tension in your forearm, upper arm, shoulders and neck and let that go. You have now learnt that it is possible to use "thinking" to release excessive tension.



Tip 5 Being present

How often do we walk into a room and realise we have forgotten what we came in for? Well we all do this. Why? Because we are too busy thinking about the next task and the next task and the next task.

Get my drift - we are no longer in the present moment. We are "ENDGAINING".

Just try this for a moment or two.

Stand with your feet slightly apart. Notice the ground beneath your feet, the tripod of support between your big toe, little toe and your heel. Think about space between the toes.

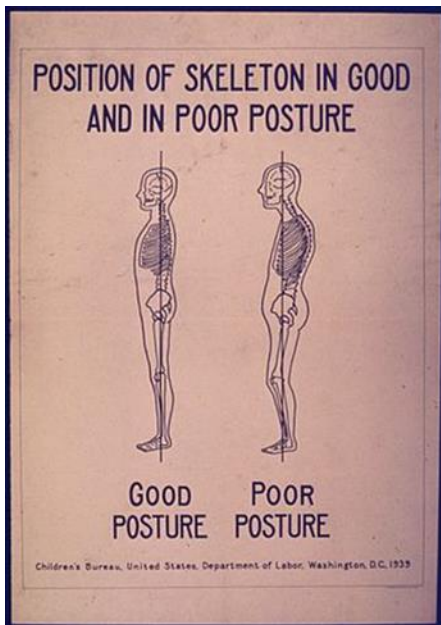
Then think about your two legs, your torso and finally the crown of your head going towards the sky / ceiling.

Think about lengthening in stature from the ground.

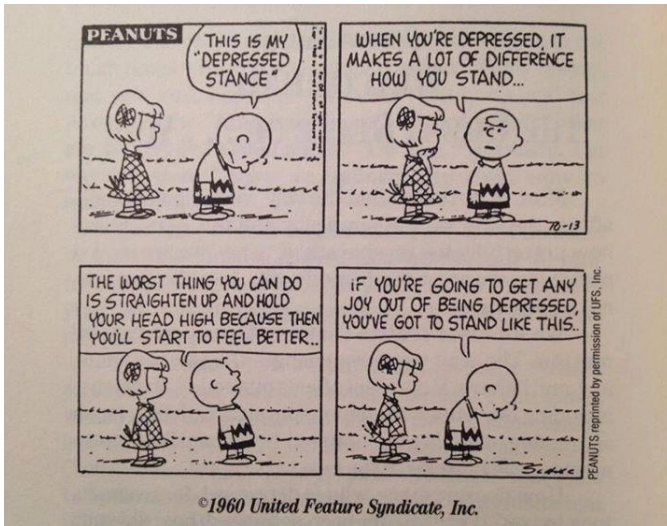
Now quietly notice your breathing, look all around you with your eyes, don't turn the head and then just listen to any sounds you can hear.

You are now present and in the moment - no longer thinking about the next task.

You may feel that you are more connected with the ground and feel a little taller too.



Tip 6 - Learning to think



You can try this little exercise to see how the mind and body are connected. Firstly, slump in the chair with your head down and try and think happy thoughts. Now sit up straight and try and think sad thoughts - it's difficult isn't it?

In previous tips I have explained how thinking can change the way we do things. The above cartoon is a great way to illustrate how our thoughts can change our being. We can choose to release tension which causes us pain if we only know how to do so.

You may already have discovered that you can

release muscular tension through lying down in semi supine but are you aware of how your patterns of movement can cause you pain. This is very difficult to ascertain for yourself. Although FM Alexander the founder of the Alexander Technique managed to discover his patterns of mis-use that were causing him problems for himself. He did this by observing himself in front of mirrors over a period of 7 years. Sadly, none of us have the time or the patience to do what Alexander did but we do have the opportunity to take lessons from qualified Alexander Technique teachers who have been trained to teach the methods he discovered.

Alexander Technique lessons allow us to discover how to carry out daily activities with less effort and we learn to move with ease and our overall performance improves.

If you would like to discover how you can move with greater balance and poise and take a proactive approach to reducing your back pain contact me to book a 1 hour Introductory Lesson or see my website for special offers on courses aimed at people with muscular skeletal pain.

www.backpaincare.co.uk

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Technique