



Dr. Pankonin's Guide to Chronic Neck and Back Pain

This free report was written by Kyle J. Pankonin, DC, DIANM, DACCP, CFMP, CCEP, a board-certified chiropractic orthopedist with nearly more than 25 years of clinical experience treating some of the most challenging pain conditions in the human body, including chronic neck and back pain caused by degenerated, herniated or bulging discs, spinal stenosis, chronic facet arthrosis and failed back surgery syndrome. This training allows him to properly diagnose the cause of the chronic neck or back pain and offer research-based, non-drug and non-surgical options.

LIVING WITH CHRONIC NECK OR BACK PAIN

I want to start this report by addressing the suffering and fears you likely are experiencing if you are living with chronic pain. You know very well how it can negatively affect your life. It affects your relationships, work, hobbies, finances and just enjoyment in life. **The ongoing battle of chronic neck or back pain is life-changing and many people suffer greatly.** While there are no absolute guarantees in healthcare, for many of you reading this guide there is hope for significant and meaningful improvement to your condition. There are advanced research-based non-drug and non-surgical options now being used throughout the United States. **These are options your traditional doctor will not tell you about.** There are ways to reduce disc bulges and herniations and to increase disc height. There are ways to calm inflammation and to stimulate healing in injured spinal tissues. Better sleep, improved flexibility, less pain and overall better quality of life is possible for many people currently suffering from chronic neck or back pain.

Let's talk about:

- What causes chronic neck and back pain
- How modern medicine addresses this problem
- Alternative treatments that work
- How to determine if you are a good candidate for alternative types of treatment

CAUSES

Chronic neck and back pain are usually caused by a problem with the discs or the facet joints in the human spine. Research is quite clear there is no such thing as chronic muscle strain in the spine even though many patients are told by their medical physician this is the problem. **The discs and facet joints seem to be the source of pain in most spine conditions and therefore where treatment should be directed.**

Common conditions that affect the disc are **degenerated disc, bulging disc, herniated disc or a torn disc.**

The disc is the most **pain-sensitive structure** in the human spine and most chronic neck or back pain sufferers have problems with them. They are the shock absorbers in between each vertebra. People with disc problems often will have associated **leg** symptoms when it is in the lower back and **arm** symptoms or **headaches** when it is in the neck.

The **facet joints** are the joints that lock or connect each vertebra to the next one. There are a lot of nerve endings in the facet joint capsules. When the facet joints are injured, misaligned, inflamed or full of wear and tear they often become very pain-sensitive. Unlike discs, they usually don't produce pain in the arms or legs as much, but can produce a lot of back or neck pain nonetheless. Some spine conditions are due to injuries either old or new. Some just develop slowly over time.

Most conditions though are caused by **faulty biomechanics** in the body. This simply means balance and alignment in the body is not optimal. The number one reason for poor balance and alignment throughout the body is poor balance and alignment in the feet. Yes, the **feet** are the most overlooked cause of imbalances and problems that develop in the spine.

Finally, one common trait in all chronic pain sufferers is **inflammation**. If you don't get whatever is causing your inflammation under control, your pain and spine will never fully heal.

SYMPTOMS

The specific amount and type of pain you experience will depend if the pain is from a disc or facet joint. Discs often cause burning, tingling, numbness or shooting pain into an arm or leg, along with back or neck pain. The reason is the compromised disc causes pressure or impingement on a specific nerve. Facet joints cause aching, sometimes sharp pain to radiate across the back or from the neck down to the shoulder blade and can sometimes be a source of headache pain.

MEDICAL TREATMENT OPTIONS

The medical approach to all chronic pain is basically the same regardless of the condition: “drug it, numb it, cut it.” Most neck or back pain sufferers who visit their medical provider will be offered some type of prescription drug initially for pain. If that doesn’t provide adequate relief they are typically referred to a pain specialist, an orthopedic surgeon or a neurosurgeon. The next step is usually some type of injection into the spine to try to dull/numb the pain and reduce inflammation. Sometimes they do a procedure to actually deaden the nerve called nerve ablation.

If drugging it or numbing it does not provide relief then sometimes a surgical (cut it) option is offered. Drugs or shots do nothing to fix the root cause of pain, only temporarily mask it. Each year in the United States **16,500 deaths are caused by non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs** commonly used to treat neck or back pain. According to some of the latest studies, epidural steroid injections have a 32% success rate in giving patients on average six weeks of relief. They are not even FDA-approved for treating neck or back pain and many countries outside of the U.S. are no longer even covering them and advising against them.

Surgery can sometimes be a necessary fix or treatment for certain spine conditions, but studies show it is **only necessary about 2-3% of the time**. Surgery also carries somewhere between a 35-54% failure rate. Patients in this group will have gotten no relief or experience the same pain or problem within one year or less. Clearly, there has to be a better way for most people.

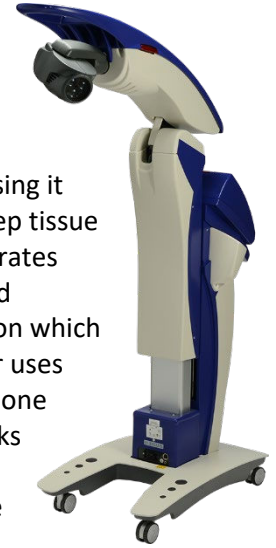
ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT OPTIONS

The first thing all chronic pain sufferers need to address is inflammation. The book “The Deflame Diet” by Dr. David Seaman provides guidance on how to eat correctly to **reduce inflammation and promote healing**. Most chronic inflammation – and therefore pain – is caused by or contributed to by what we eat on a regular basis.

There is no one magic bullet cure for treating chronic pain. It takes a **comprehensive approach** to find and address the cause then to correct or at least improve the damage that has occurred in the spine. Let’s look at each of the advanced, research-based treatment components we use in a little more detail.

What are your treatment options?

- **MLS (Multiwave Locked System) Laser Therapy** is a class IV laser and is the most powerful available on the market for treating chronic pain conditions. Red Rock Chiropractic Center is one of the only clinics in this entire part of the state to offer this breakthrough technology and has been using it for more than 10 years. Deep tissue robotic laser therapy penetrates into the facets and discs and stimulates energy production which promotes healing. The laser uses two different wavelengths: one works on pain and one works on inflammation. They are synced together to produce a synergistic effect.



Cutting Edge Multiwave Locked System Therapy Laser

- **Non-Surgical Spinal Axial Decompression** Therapy utilizing the Hill DT table is one of the most advanced decompression tables on the market for treating tough cases of chronic neck or back pain. We are the only clinic in this entire part of the state to utilize this advanced treatment option. This specialized treatment table gently decompresses the disc to relieve pressure on the nerves. It can increase disc height and help reduce bulging and herniated discs. Studies on the Hill DT table show about a 91% success rate. It is gentle, well-tolerated and can be a real game-changer, especially when



paired with laser therapy.

Hill DT Solutions Decompression Table

- **Chiropractic adjustments:** Red Rock Chiropractic Center is one of only a few clinics in Minnesota that is specially trained in the application of this type of adjustment. It is one of the best researched chiropractic adjusting techniques for treating disc and facet pain and also in treating a specific condition called spinal stenosis. It is a gentle technique and involves no cracking or aggressive maneuvers which many chronic pain sufferers find a relief. It opens up the spine and improves spinal motion.
- **Custom orthotics or a custom pillow:** For our chronic back pain sufferers we prescribe custom Foot Levelers orthotics. Studies show just wearing them can reduce chronic back pain by 34.5%. When paired with chiropractic adjustments studies show symptom relief can be over 40% with a 30% improvement in function. Foot Levelers address the imbalances as mentioned earlier that start in the feet. Wearing them can improve overall body balance and alignment. For our chronic neck pain sufferers we prescribe a custom NEXI™ pillow from Foot Levelers. Their postural analysis scans precise measurements of the head, neck, shoulder and upper torso areas to create a custom pillow uniquely designed for each patient. This can help keep the neck properly supported and aligned at night and alleviate waking up with a stiff/sore neck or headache.
- **Targeted supplementation** containing ingredients that have been shown to help heal and support the discs of the spine are prescribed. We use a supplement that contains specific enzymes and forms of chondroitin sulfate for enhancing disc health. Improving the health and hydration of the disc is a big component to helping chronic back or neck pain.

KEY THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Again, there is no one magic bullet cure for treating chronic neck or back pain. It takes a comprehensive approach to find and address the cause then correct or at least improve the damage that has occurred. Chronic back or neck pain is the most common reason people end up on disability. If not treated properly it can continue to get worse and rob quality and years off of life.

CAN YOU BE HELPED?

A thorough review of your condition and overall health history and a thorough examination is the only way to determine how far your spine condition has progressed and if it can be helped.

We will be honest with you. If your condition is too severe, has been present for too long, or if you are unwilling to make changes and follow the program then we will tell you we cannot help. On the other hand, if your history and exam shows us a treatable condition and you are willing to make some changes and follow the program, then we will let you know that we likely can help. We have an 89% success rate in reducing chronic neck or back pain by at least 50% or more.

Our goal is to reduce your symptoms by a minimum of 50% or more. In some severe cases, 50% improvement is a huge success in quality of living, and many patients will see more improvement than that. Total and complete healing is not always attainable, but we have seen many cases achieve well over 50% symptom relief.

Let us help you discover how much better life can be with less spine pain.

ARE YOU READY?

Your options now are to do nothing, continue to do whatever it is you've been doing, or to try this research-backed, comprehensive program. Chances are if you're reading this report, you are looking for more answers and other options, and it may be safe to assume what you are currently doing is not working. Remember, chronic neck and back pain rarely gets better on its own. If it was going to it would have by now. Disc degeneration is progressive and tends to get worse with time. **Call us at 507-752-7650 to schedule your first appointment.** Our staff will guide you through the paperwork process and can answer any additional questions you may have about the program. Be sure to read our frequently asked questions attached to this guide as it will answer many of your initial questions.

YOUR FIRST VISIT

We will review your symptoms and overall health history and perform a thorough examination to determine if you are a good candidate for our program. If you are a good candidate, we will review your specific program details and set up a schedule. Again, if after reviewing your history and exam we feel you are not a good candidate, we will be honest with you about why and will do our best to guide you in the right direction.

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS

- How has your condition affected your work, family, relationships, recreational activities and finances?
- How much sleep has this condition robbed from you?
- How does this lack of sleep affect the rest of your health?
- What is it worth to you if your condition could be improved?
- How will your condition be in five years if you don't take care of it now?
- Are you willing to make some changes?

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

Dr. Kyle has invested a tremendous amount of time, training and expense to bring this program to our area. We are the only clinic in southwest Minnesota with the training, equipment and experience to take on the complex challenge of chronic neck and back pain without drugs, shots or surgery. Learn more about our innovative program at redrockchiro.com. Check out all the drop-down items under the Decompression tab, including informational videos and a free webinar. We look forward to helping you to achieve better health and much needed pain relief.

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Decompression FAQs

1. **How many treatments does it take to achieve the desired results?** According to published research, patients with a chronic (long-term) condition will need about 24 visits to achieve long-term physiological changes.
2. **What are my chances of achieving pain relief?** According to a recently published research study by Dr. Timothy Burkhart of Hill DT Solutions, a person with chronic back or neck pain has a 91% chance of achieving full or very significant pain relief. Many patients are able to avoid surgery.
3. **How much will this cost me?** Programs cost about \$3,300 for one area and \$4,600 for two areas. Payment plans are available.
4. **What are the different parts of a successful decompression program?** All components are essential as each works together in the healing process to achieve the best possible result. It is important not to pick and choose, but do them all.
 - Decompression – 24 sessions is what research shows to be the optimal dosage for long-term relief. Decompression is \$50 per session for one area and an additional \$25 per session for a second area.
 - Chiropractic adjustments – 12-24 sessions is usually recommended for the technique we use.
 - MLS laser therapy – 24 sessions is recommended for chronic pain. MLS is \$50 per session for one area and an additional \$25 per session for a second area.
 - Rehab – for low back conditions we use the Cox low back rehab program (\$18). For neck conditions we use the Cox Isotonic Neck device to strengthen the neck muscles (\$35). It is important to do your rehab exercises at home to support the progress we make in the clinic.
 - Postural support – Foot Levelers orthotics (\$275) have been shown to relieve low back pain by 35% and are prescribed for all low back patients. NEXI™ tom pillows (\$300) give proper overnight support and are prescribed for all cervical decompression patients.
 - Nutritional supplementation – we use Disc Discovery which contains the nutrients spinal discs need for repair and regeneration. It is essential to take this during the program. The cost is \$26 per bottle with a total of three bottles used through the three months of the program.

When combined, this comprehensive care package all works together to produce the best outcome.

5. **Will the relief I achieve last?** According to published research, more than 50% of patients were able to maintain a pain-free or near pain-free status for up to four years after treatment had ended.
6. **Is this the same as traditional traction therapy?** In short, no. Decompression therapy creates true decompression in the spine, meaning it reduces pressure in the disc to a negative amount. Traditional traction or inversion therapy does provide stretching of the spine – which can be beneficial – but does not reduce pressure enough in the disc to achieve a negative amount. In a head-to-head study, decompression therapy rendered good to excellent relief in 86% of patients with herniated discs and 75% of patients with facet syndrome. Traction therapy yielded no excellent results in patients with herniated discs and only 50% of patients with facet syndrome rendered good to excellent results.
7. **What conditions is spinal decompression treatment used for?** Degenerated discs, herniated discs, bulging discs, facet syndrome, failed spine surgery, or failure to respond to traditional chiropractic, physical therapy, steroid injections or pain medication.
8. **Why aren't other chiropractors and physical therapists in our area offering this service?** Many chiropractors and physical therapists are not comfortable treating complex spine pain cases. And most in our area do not have the same extra training or certifications as Dr. Kyle. Decompression therapy is a specialized technique for treating these cases. The decompression therapy table is an expensive piece of equipment which may deter some clinicians from purchasing one.
9. **Why doesn't my insurance pay for decompression therapy?** Some aspects of your chiropractic care may be covered by insurance such as chiropractic adjustments, therapeutic services and rehab exercises. Postural supports, supplements, MLS laser and decompression therapy are not covered by insurance. Decompression is a relatively new technology and insurance takes a while to cover some new treatment options. Also, decompression therapy has been proven effective and works so well that if insurance covered it almost everyone with neck or back pain would give it a try. This would not be profitable for insurance companies.

Here's what we've accomplished for our patients...

What could **decompression therapy** do for you?

2014-2025

58% reported	excellent results	(75-100% improvement)
31% reported	good results	(50-74% improvement)
11% reported	fair results	(25-50% improvement)

85% of our chronic neck and back pain patients in 2025
experienced good to excellent **results**

Study updated January 2026 via Red Rock Chiropractic Center. Study based on Red Rock Chiropractic Center patients from January 2014 through December 2025 who completed decompression programs as prescribed.