

## Driving, Anger, and the Importance of Breathing



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Even though I only drive to work for 10 minutes a day I am still astounded by how many fellow drivers act as though they are *Formula 1* racers! I used to believe that the drivers in Los Angeles were terrible, but San Diego makes them look tame. In LA, young male drivers tend to dominate the driving scene with their souped-up Honda's, yet in San Diego it isn't uncommon to see both male and female drivers racing their Porches down the highway to get their kids to school on time. It seems that in San Diego everyone is a Michael Schumacher! But then again, it comes as no surprise, really, because America's *Plymouth of the West* is all about speed and maneuverability. That having been said, the incidences of violence directly involving road rage have escalated dramatically over the last few years, and San Diego is no exception. Whilst we may think we value communication more than in the City of Angels, we fall prey to the same irritation and anger that our neighbors feel on a daily basis.

I am not totally innocent in this, either. According to my wife, I too suffer from road rage at times. The truth is I do try to calm down and be mindful when I drive, but doing that became a lot harder when I opened my own business and started juggling so many different responsibilities. I had to start thinking of ways to manage my stress and reduce my irritation; if I didn't, I could have ended up hurting myself, or worse still, hurting someone else out on the roads.

One of the best ways I managed to control my anger in the car was "breathing". Yes, that's right. I started experimenting with breathing techniques whilst I was a waiter in a very busy restaurant years ago.



During that time the restaurant was extremely popular and the customers often ended up standing in a que while they were waiting to be seated. Ultimately, hunger set in and their agitation levels rose dramatically; I had to

move fast, think fast, be patient, and most importantly, I had to smile. This was not easy, especially when my feet ached and my head was pounding. Of course, the faster I moved, the less agile and alert I became; I often ended up dropping bottles and plates at an alarming rate. Humiliated, embarrassed, and angry, I used to ask God to help me calm down. He did, of course, but I realized I need to make the effort to create a better frame of mind for myself. Hence, I started using useful breathing techniques.

#### Here's how you can do it too:

- Begin by closing your eyes; sit so that the back of the chair supports your body and your feet touch the ground.
- Breathe in and out and consciously feel the air move around your body. Feel it entering through your nostrils and filling your belly and chest. Be aware of the air as it shifts within you, understand the rhythm of it, and be grateful for the life God has given you today.
- Without altering your breathing, quietly observe the gap between your inhalation and exhalation.
- Repeat the process until you feel relaxed and aware of your peace of mind returning.

Research has consistently proven the benefits of relaxation, meditation, and breathing. Not only does regulated breathing lower your blood pressure, combat stress, reduce the risk of heart attack and strokes, and even fight depression, it can also REDUCE PAIN and give you peace of mind. That's right. Breathing techniques can decrease your pain.

So, take a few minutes out of your busy day to relax, breathe, and thank God for this moment. Creating a healthy habit focused on breathing exercises will give you a healthier, fuller life with reduced pain and increased fulfillment.

**If you want to contact me regarding more information through email, send your questions to [admin@genuinecarept.com](mailto:admin@genuinecarept.com) or call at (858)-847-2025.**

# STRONG BODY STRONG MIND

LEARN SECRETS TO KEEP STRONG AND ACTIVE, MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE AND LIVE FREE FROM MEDICATION.



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## Sunlight: A Double-Edged Sword

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Sunlight: you know it must have benefits, but somewhere in the back of your mind the echoes of your mother's voice remain, her warnings against sun exposure causing you to rethink your day at the beach. Where do we draw the line between the benefits of the sun and the harmful effects it might have on our bodies? In today's post I talk about both the benefits and adverse effects of the sun, and I also give you some useful tips on how to harness the healthful qualities of sunshine in order to be a healthier, happier you!

It's no wonder that the sun has been one of the most talked about health topics of the last century: not only does it enable life on our planet and give us light, it also has an array of health benefits. Yet there is, of course, a darker side to the sun; we now see more people than ever dying of skin cancer or other related complications. Where, then, is the balance, and how can we harness the benefits without the dangers? It might help if we knew exactly what these were:

#### • Benefits of Responsible Sun Exposure:

1. **Vitamin D!** It's no surprise that Vitamin D is known as the *sunshine vitamin*, as the most effective, naturally sourced way of getting some of this vital vitamin is simply by spending some time in the outdoors. Vitamin D regulates over 1000 genes in the human body: these genes effect tissues and mental functions. Increasing vitamin D is an unmissable step on your journey to health. In fact, studies have linked vitamin D deficiency to an array of diseases, not least of which include bone diseases, autoimmune diseases, cardiovascular complications, and even diabetes.

2. **Mental Health.** Not only does vitamin D increase gene regulation and tissue function, it also increases happiness. Yes, that's right! Research has shown that responsible exposure to the sun plays a vital role in mental health; vitamin D increases serotonin levels in the brain, thereby acting in the same way that many anti-depressants do. Countless patients have experienced the benefits of sunshine in their fights against depression.

#### • Dangers of Irresponsible Sun Exposure:

1. **Cancer.** This is the big bad wolf when it comes to the sun. Since the beginning of the 20th Century, prolonged, irresponsible sun exposure has been linked to skin cancer. And this is no joke: thousands of people are diagnosed with skin cancer yearly, and while most of these cases prove to be Caucasian people, skin cancer is certainly not restricted to fairer skinned races. 1 in 5 people have skin cancer in the U.S alone: please don't let this be you.

2. **Sun Burn.** Not only is being burnt linked directly to an increased chance of skin cancer in later life, it also wreaks havoc on the health of your skin in other ways. Once burnt, the skin loses elasticity and tightness, thus causing it to droop and age prematurely. Most people who spend too much time in the sun tend to grow old much sooner than they ought.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

02 Mythbusters For Back Pain

03 Visible to Invisible – A Paradigm Shift in Modern Medicine

04 Driving, Anger, and the Importance of Breathing

Bottom line? We need the sun, but we certainly need to be exposed to it responsibly. Being informed about the health risks AND the benefits will give you the best possible chance to harness the power of the sun in a safe, regulated manner.

So, how can you truly reap the benefits without risking your health? Take a look at the following tips for some answers.

#### • Tips for Healthy Sun Exposure Know Your Skin

Knowing your skin type is vital when considering exposure to the sun: darker skin can be exposed for longer periods without the risk of sun burn, while lighter skin tends to burn quickly. The thing is, though, darker skin produces vitamin D a lot slower. Keep this in mind when you face the sun.

## Visible to Invisible - A Paradigm Shift in Modern Medicine

The basis of Western medicine is formulated on a biomedical model, that is, a focus on disease that is defined by a biological defect visible in an image, laboratory, or under a microscope. The efficacy of this theory is evident in an increased life expectancy now noticeable all over the world. This theory has saved the lives of countless people; *that* cannot be denied. But, it is my opinion that it also lacks a fundamental holistic approach and is, for that reason, incapable of truly promoting wellness.

Let me explain. In no other way is the value of the biomedical model more evident than in *Germ Theory*. Focusing on sanitation and antibiotics, the theory revolutionized medication in the late 1800's, leading to a phenomenal drop in mortality caused by infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, influenza, pneumonia, and countless others. It is no wonder, then, that following this monumental medical change the pharmaceutical industry was revolutionized dramatically. Consequently, the



Health is  
More Than a  
Physical  
Diagnosis

ways in which the body was treated by doctors started to encounter a massive paradigm shift. In fact, things changed so drastically that physical discomfort was no longer treated as a mechanical issue; rather, medication was administered to mask the pain. Thus, *Germ Theory* paved the way for a treatment of physical defects with the use of medications.

As such, it is in direct relation to these changes that, in modern times, people still seek a chemical answer to a mechanical problem. It is no wonder, then, that so many patients visit specialists in the hope of finding a physical defect that can be treated using medication. It just isn't working.

I believe that people have developed a tendency to rely too heavily on medications, technology, and surgery in order to cure visible physical conditions or defects. Unfortunately, these measures are still widely considered as the best way to treat physical ailments. In consequence, so few people realize that, in the late 20th Century, researchers disproved the efficacy of this approach. This is what they found:

- ▶ Healthcare costs are increasing dramatically because of the rampant, and oftentimes irresponsible use of the latest medicines, chemicals, and technologies.
- ▶ Disease changes: there is no formula and no single drug that can eliminate disease completely.
- ▶ Bad behavior translates into health problems: smoking, exercise, and sleep are but some examples of factors that affect our health and which cannot be cured using medication.

Thus, research has shown that there is a discrepancy in the way modern healthcare, especially the biomedical model, approaches the patient. It is clear that the biomedical model seeks to separate mental and physical issues, prescribing medicines for physical ailments without accounting for behavioral patterns or lifestyle. According to physicians, behavioral or mental afflictions are the responsibility of a therapist and are 'unreal' in the medical world. Not so: the flaw in the biomedical model lies precisely in the fact that health is more than a physical diagnosis; it is an understanding of the mental, physical, and spiritual aspect of the individual. Importantly, it is only when all these areas are looked at in relation to one another that true health can be achieved. Medications are just not the answer.

In America alone 7 out of 10 deaths are the result of chronic diseases that cost the nation \$1.9 trillion in healthcare costs. And the worst part is, the patients are not being cured! A third of them die! What we are missing is that we are only taking care of the physical body, not the whole being. If more attention was paid to the mind, defects in the body could be attributed to habits, addiction, misunderstanding, depression, and a host of other behavioral issues. This diagnosis could ultimately lead to a CURE, not just a pretense.

Time and time again I have witnessed the power of the mind. It is the single most powerful weapon we have. When we are positive, our health improves accordingly. When we are negative, or angry, our back pain increases, our mood fluctuates, and our blood pressure rises. The mental and physical realms cannot be separated. Well-being isn't the management of disease, it is the study of the mind in direct relation to the cause of the disease. We have to look at the root cause of the problem, be that mental, physical, or spiritual, in order to cure and prevent its reoccurrence. Health, happiness, and wellbeing are as a result of multiple factors; let's break away from the stagnant thinking of the biomedical narrative and into a full, accessible life.

You are not a machine, and thus, should not be diagnosed like one. Doctors should not be computers solely interested in administering medications to hide the problems. Healing is not a product of medication or surgery; it is found in the strong relationships professionals can build with our patients and in the understanding of the whole person, not just the disease. Research shows that medical professionals need to look at the bigger picture and not just at the illness. A human being is the most sophisticated creature God has ever made, and understanding HUMANITY, understanding every single person as a unique entity with behaviors, habits, knowledge, feelings, and value, is the key to a true healing experience.

So, discard the outdated biomedical model and opt, instead, for a *biopsychosocial* model which includes mental health, preventative and wellness services, and chronic disease management. We need to focus on *patient-centered* care that's of a higher quality, has greater accessibility, leads to greater patient satisfaction, and comes with a much lower price tag. Your life is not just something to be examined and treated without humanity. Wellness is not disease centered; it is defined by the radical inclusion of mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual healing in order to experience a superior quality of life. Walk the path which leads you to the life you deserve, today!

## MythBusters For Back Pain

Lower back pain affects around 60-90% of individuals during their lifetime. In fact, it is the most common reason people seek medical attention, second only to the common cold. That having been said, what does such a figure cost? In the U.S. alone, we spend more money on the management of back pain (\$90 billion a year) than on cancer research, or even on foreign aid government expenditure! Back pain is so common that it's likely you will know someone at work or in your family suffering from it. And yet, despite this massive social issue, most people remain misinformed about what causes back pain and how it can be overcome. In this post, I hope to differentiate the facts from the myths in order to help you manage and overcome back pain, right now. Because of the misunderstood nature of back pain, it's important to debunk the myths in order to get to the truth. So, let's jump straight in:

### Myth 1: "I am in pain, so I need to rest."

This is one of the most common misconceptions. In fact, research strongly opposes this idea. Rest is NOT a way to overcome back pain. In truth, the way to health is to not rest longer than 1-2 days at a time. People who spend too much time resting their backs are generally considered "avoiders", that is, people who want to avoid any activities due to pain. Avoiders have a much higher risk of developing increased, chronic pain. Of course, I'm not suggesting you find activities that necessarily increase your pain, but I *am* suggesting that you stay active by doing other activities that don't provoke the issue. Why not try gentle walking or Pilates? Make the decision to get out of bed and find some activities that you enjoy doing. That is the key to overcoming your back pain.

### Myth 2: "My back pain is constant and not getting better... that means something is seriously wrong."

The fact of the matter is, regardless of what one might imagine, the spine is an incredibly strong structure with great support offered by muscles, ligaments, tendons, etc. Thus, the vast majority of lower back pain happens in the absence of serious structural damage (>90%). Only 1% of people with low back pain have serious problems such as a tumors, inflammation, or infection. Only 2% of back pain comes from other organs such as the bladder, kidney, prostate, etc. True sciatica, or "nerve pinching", happens to only 5% or less of the total population suffering from back pain. Therefore, it's important to understand that back pain isn't necessary to do with structural damage; the rarity of spinal issues present in back pain sufferers is evident in the research. The truth is, finding the root cause of the problem is essential to healing back pain, and more often than not there is no serious structural damage at all.

### Myth 3: "I need to have an MRI test to show what is wrong."

An MRI should not be your first port of call in the case of back pain. Only if conservative therapy has failed should you consider taking a MRI or X-ray. If you have neurological signs such as foot dropping/dragging, sensation changes, bowel/bladder function changes, and/or a shooting pains down the leg, then a MRI is recommended. Research shows that the results of a MRI, that is, possible structural damage or abnormalities, do not accurately predict what contributes to back pain. In fact, even if you do not feel any back pain, a MRI may falsely predict that you do feel pain. The truth is, 50-80% of individuals who have spinal disc problems, as indicated by an MRI, have no complaints about back pain. One study even shows that taking a MRI in the early stages of pain tripled the recommendations for surgery, but did not improve the outcome for the patient. Make a MRI your last option.

### Myth 4: "Heat and massages make me feel better, so I am sure they will cure me."

In truth, heat and massages only give you temporary relief. Research indicates that both options lack long term benefits. That having been said, both heat treatments and massages can be used as a supplement to physical therapy and stretching. Heat and massages help your muscles to relax, but in most cases tight muscles aren't the source of your back pain; they are just a by-product of the main issue.

### Myth 5: "An inversion table will cure my sciatica."

An inversion table is a device used, in some cases, to treat back pain. The patient's feet are strapped in and he/she is tilted backwards, thereby applying traction force to the spine through the use of body weight. It has gained popularity in the last few years, and in physical therapy treatment we sometimes use a traction machine to help patients. Ours, however, is horizontal. Importantly, though, in physical therapy we only use traction devices in special cases. In fact, according to Stanton's 2011 study, less than 10% of patients with back pain fall into the group that might benefit from traction. In other words, inversion tables or traction machines have benefits, but are **not for everybody**. In order to determine whether somebody will benefit from traction, one must perform a thorough examination, preferably conducted by a professional physical therapist. Another point to consider before using this type of device is blood flow. In an inverted position, blood pressure in the brain and eyeballs increases dramatically, so it is not recommended for those who have high blood pressure or eye problems.

### Myth 6: "I have back pain because of my age."

As we all know, aging is irreversible and is accompanied changes. This is no different when it comes to our spine. Normal aging processes affect our backs by narrowing the spinal joint spaces and thinning the discs. Despite this, the occurrence of back pain is actually most prevalent between the ages of 35-55. Age doesn't seem to play a massive role in back pain! By not resigning to lower-back pain as an expected symptom of aging, your chances of recovery will increase significantly.

Despite diminishing reimbursement rates for medical services, physical therapy is one of the few professions that still takes the time to perform a comprehensive physical examination in order to determine a course of treatment. *Genuine Care Physical Therapy is one of the very few clinics that utilizes 1:1 treatment with a licensed, board-certified specialist. Furthermore, our sessions last for over an hour.* Even without a referral, our qualified physical therapists can make the differences you need. We can suggest a customized plan for individuals with lower back pain. Moreover, physical therapists can help restore the motion that you've lost via the use of hands-on treatment of spinal joints, muscles, and soft tissues. Physical therapists can also prescribe exercises fit for each individual's needs. Furthermore, they can also instruct patients about proper body mechanics and strengthening programs in order to substantially lower the chance of the problem resurfacing.

Don't let back pain determine the quality of your life. With 6 common myths now debunked, we invite you to call us TODAY for more information and treatment. We look forward to helping you achieve the pain free, active lifestyle you deserve.

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