



Lumbar Supports Prove Ineffective in Cases of Low Back Pain
van Duijvenbode ICD, et al. "Lumbar supports for prevention and treatment of low back pain (Review)." Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2008, Issue 2

The results of a systematic review by the Amsterdam School for Health Professionals has shown that lumbar supports are no more effective than lifting education — or no treatment whatsoever — in preventing related pain or reducing disability in those who suffer from low back pain. “We recommend the general population and workers not wear lumbar supports to prevent low back pain or for the management of low back pain,” said lead author Ingrid van Duijvenbode, a teacher and member of the research group at the Amsterdam School for Health Professionals in the Netherlands.

She and her colleagues looked at 15 studies — seven prevention and eight treatment studies — that included more than 15,000 people. When measuring pain prevention or reduction in number of sick days used, the researchers found little or no difference between people who used supports and their peers who did not. The review appears in the latest issue of The Cochrane Library, a publication of The Cochrane Collaboration, an international organization that evaluates medical research. Systematic reviews draw evidence-based conclusions about medical practice after considering both the content and quality of existing medical trials on a topic.

“This continues the line of research that shows lumbar supports make no difference in treating or preventing low back pain,” said Joel Press, M.D., associate professor of physical medicine and rehabilitation at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine. “Looking at the literature on lumbar supports, it is difficult to make any conclusions because these studies are using supports for many different causes of low back pain. It would be hard to prove any one treatment is effective for every type of back pain, just as it would be difficult to prove that any one heart medication would be good for every type of heart problem.” Press goes on to say, “I usually tell my patients asking about lumbar supports that while there is not a lot of evidence that it is useful overall, there are still individuals who might benefit from their use. But it should be used as an adjunct treatment if it helps, to activate patients to increase their activity and exercise.”

THERAPIST SPOTLIGHT



Greg McCall, PT, owner of All Pro Physical Therapy

After receiving a biology degree at Colorado State University, Greg attained his Physical Therapy degree from the University of Colorado in 1985. After working in a variety of settings, he attained his level 4 credential in manual therapy from the North American Institute of Orthopedic Manual Therapy in 1999 and became owner/operator of All Pro Physical Therapy, P.C. that same year. He is also an Orthopedic Clinical Specialist through ABPTS and currently the President of the Colorado Chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association. The clinical focus at All Pro Physical Therapy is “all things orthopedic” from TMJ dysfunction and headaches to foot and ankle problems, including custom foot orthotic devices.



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