

PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

Back Pain: How OMT Can Help

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Low back pain is discomfort that is experienced in the area of the back that is beneath the ribcage. This area of your back is often referred to as your lumbar region. There are many causes of back pain, but the most common cause of low back pain is a muscular strain. This is an injury that can occur from quick, forceful bending and twisting motions of the back. Muscular strain can also develop over time from repetitive movements and heavy lifting. Often, back pain can resolve on its own without any medicine or therapies. When the pain does not go away, people often seek medicine or various therapies. Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment (OMT) has been shown to help improve mobility and comfort for individuals with low back pain.

WHAT IS OMT?

OMT is a hands-on treatment that can help improve the balance and function of your muscles, bones, and even other organ systems. These techniques can be performed by an osteopathic physician (DO). During OMT, you will experience gentle pressure or resistance. You should not experience pain during treatment. Your doctor may change treatment techniques depending on your level of comfort.

WHAT OMT TECHNIQUES CAN HELP WITH LOW BACK PAIN?

Soft Tissue OMT Technique: Stretching and light pressure applied to muscles.

Myofascial Release OMT Technique: There is a thin layer of tissue around muscles called “fascia.” This technique involves gentle, firm pressure applied by the doctor’s hands across your upper/lower back.

Muscle Energy OMT Technique: This type of treatment involves the doctor positioning your back (seated or laying down) and then moving in a specific direction while your doctor counters that movement.

High-Velocity Low-Amplitude OMT Technique: This technique involves a short, quick movement towards joints to help promote bone/muscle symmetry. Often a small “pop” or “crack” may be felt and/or heard during treatment. This should not be painful.

WHERE CAN YOU GET OMT?

You will need to locate a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) to obtain OMT. These are physicians who attended four years of medical school and have additional medical training to perform OMT. Use osteopathic.org to locate an osteopathic physician in your area.



SOURCE(S): American Association of Family Physicians, WebMD, National Institutes of Health

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