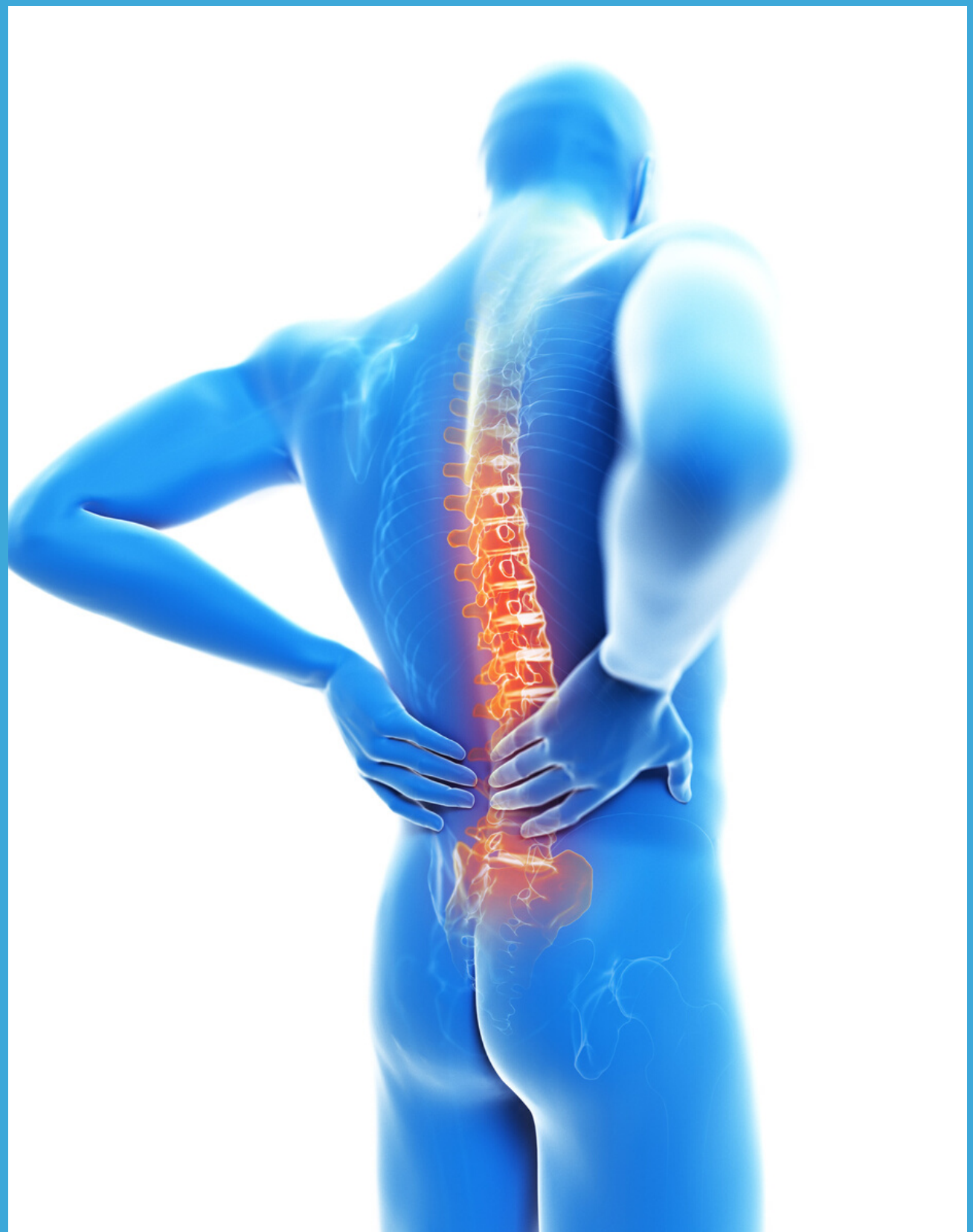


# DISC RECOVERY GUIDE

**A GUIDE TO BETTER HEALTH**



**SUMMIT SPINE AND WELLNESS**  
[www.summitspineandwellness.com](http://www.summitspineandwellness.com)

# Understanding Your Disc is the Key To Recovery

The purpose of this guide is to help you understand your disc injury so that you may reduce inflammation, speed up your recovery and learn how to avoid provocative positions and activities in the future. Any injury involving a spinal disc can be a very painful experience and if you are reading this now you probably have experienced this pain first hand. If you follow these steps you will be able to decrease your inflammation, decrease your pain, and increase your healing time.

**THE DISC IS  
USUALLY THE  
SOURCE OF  
YOUR PAIN**

The disc is the source of neck and back pain 90 % of the time. Even though your back pain may feel muscular at times, the injury is usually a result of a ligamentous sprain to the disc. This sprain may be from a major trauma such as a fall or accident. However, the injury may be from a micro-trauma such as repetitive lifting or poor posture. Identifying the specific structural problem in the disc will allow for the most effective treatment. If at the first episode your disc injury is tended to correctly, you will greatly reduce the chances for re-injury, recurrence and surgery. This guide will give you the best tips and strategies to help you manage and heal your disc injury quickly.



## DISC INJURY

The majority of spinal disc herniations occur in the lumbar spine (95% at L4-L5 or L5-S1). The second most common site is the cervical region (C5-C6, C6-C7).

## THE ANATOMY OF YOUR DISC

The disc is comprised of two parts:

1. Annulus Fibrosis, which is the outside wall of the disc and is made up of ligaments.
2. Nucleus Pulposus, the inside gel like substance.

The outside wall of the disc is thinner and weaker in the back and is often the site of the disc injury. Activities such as sitting, slumping, bending over and looking down all keep this area of the disc stressed out and more prone to injury.

# Your Discs Move When You Move



## Healthy Disc Movement

When you bend forward, the gel like substance in the disc moves backwards.

When you bend backwards, the gel like substance in the disc moves forwards.

When you bend to the side, the gel like substance will be compressed to the opposite side you are bending to.



Bending not only pushes the inside disc material, but stretches the wall of the ligaments on the opposite side.

The average person reaches  
**FLEXION 50 TIMES**  
per day  
and full extension 0 times.

## Not All Disc Injuries are the Same

If the disc bulge is off to one side, the pain and symptoms usually present on that side. If the disc bulge is more centralized then the pain will be as well. However, symptoms can alternate from one side to another. This is because the nature of the gel like nucleus that can shift from one side to another inside the disc. As the disc injury worsens, the symptoms begin to radiate. The bigger the disc bulge, the more pressure on the nerve and the symptoms will intensify and radiate into extremities or travel away from the center of the spine. Not only will the pain travel, but the patient will become more stiff and movements such as bending backwards become more difficult.

## Symptoms of a Disc Injury

A disc injury can occur in the neck or low back. Symptoms of a disc injury depend on where the disc is, how severe the injury is and if the disc is pressing on a nerve.

- Neck pain.
- Back pain.
- Sciatica.
- Numbness and tingling radiating into the shoulder, arm, hand, hip, leg or foot.
- Weakness in arm or leg.
- Pain usually worsens when you're being active and lessens when you're resting.
- Coughing, sneezing, and sitting can aggravate your symptoms.



# If you Suspect you have a DISC Injury

## DISC INJURY ADVICE



- ✓ Assess your level of inflammation and reduce the inflammation accordingly. See below for details and our anti-inflammatory home recommendations.
- ✓ DO NOT STRETCH THROUGH THE PAIN. Stretching a disc injury will cause more inflammation and may increase the damage.
- ✓ Practice GOOD POSTURE and limit the amount of sitting.
- ✓ Take short walks, if it lessens the symptoms.
- ✓ If you cannot walk, lay down on the less painful side.
- ✓ Avoid positions and activities that cause your symptoms to radiate farther from the spine.
- ✓ Contact a Chiropractor that offers disc decompression and that is experienced with treating disc issues effectively.

## 3 DISC SAVING POSTURE TIPS



- 1 ENHANCE THE NATURAL CURVE.**  
Maintain a C-shaped curve in the low back. You can roll up a towel and place in the small of the back when seated to help encourage this natural curve.
- 2 MAINTAIN A STRAIGHT LINE.**  
Keep your ears directly over your shoulders at all times especially when seated, texting or working on computers.
- 3 LOCK YOUR STOMACH.**  
Before lifting, bending or twisting, tighten your stomach and gluteal muscles. This will tighten your core and protect the discs in the lumbar spine.

## 4 DISC RECOVERY STEPS



# STEP 1

## ARE YOU INFLAMED?

### The Inflammation Checklist:



### How many factors apply to You?

- I have chronic aches and pains in my joints and muscles.
- I regularly take over-the-counter pain medication such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen.
- I regularly eat refined sugar (sweets, sodas, sweetened drinks).
- I regularly eat partially hydrogenated oils (trans fat) found in fast foods and packaged foods.
- I regularly eat mayonnaise, tartar sauce, margarine or premade salad dressings.
- I regularly consume dairy (cheese, milk, etc...).
- I avoid eating vegetables with every meal.
- I consume soy/soy based products in place of vegetables.
- I eat meat with every meal.
- I am overweight and/or it is hard to lose weight.
- I can grab too much fat around my waist.
- I am physically lethargic.
- I do not exercise regularly.
- I do not recover well from exercise.
- I look or feel old for my age.
- I am prone to cold, allergy, or flu symptoms.
- I am a smoker.
- My body mass index is over 24.9.



*If more than 5 of these apply to you, you have chronic inflammation affecting your body causing a delayed healing time.*



### DEFLAME YOUR BODY:

- Ice
- Fish Oil
- Ginger
- Turmeric
- Resveratrol
- NSAIDS
- Corticosteroids may be necessary.

\*We will work with your MD to help you reduce inflammation to get the best results.

## STEP 2

# HOME RECOMMENDATIONS

### Don't take the pain lying down.

While it may be tempting to stay in bed, doing so can make the pain worse over time and actually reduce flexibility and create more stiffness in your body. Depending on your current health status you can put yourself at risk for more serious illnesses.



### Take control of the pain.

While using hot or cold packs and over-the-counter pain medications won't cure the problem, they can help make the pain more tolerable. These are a good first step to help reduce your pain, but they are not long term solutions. Use these tools sparingly. Here is how:



#### HOT OR NOT

Within the first two days of the injury or flare up, use ice 15 minutes on and then 15 minutes off. Repeat this 3-4 times throughout the day. Once you move beyond the first two days, you can then apply a hot compress. You may also alternate the hot and cold at this time as well. We advise our patients to use what helps the most and gives the most relief.



There are various forms of natural pain relievers that can help dull the pain while the injury is healing. Some of our favorites:

- Arnica
- Salon Pas
- Biofreeze
- Essential Oils such as peppermint, wintergreen and lavender
- Herbs/Spices such as ginger and turmeric
- Acupuncture

## STEP 3

# Movement

### What Kind of Movement is Best?

The goal is to find movement that will reduce the disc bulge so your disc injury can heal. If the area continues to be stressed, your body will continue to lay down more inflammation and the disc injury cannot heal.



# START HERE: Confirm Your Injury is Disc Related

## Sit to Stand Test

If you find it difficult to stand from a seated position, this may confirm a disc injury.



## What is the BEST Movement for You?

The BEST movement for you depends on your specific injury. This is not a one size fits all. The mechanism of your injury, the position of the disc bulge and the exact location of the torn tissue will determine how you need to move.

### Ask Yourself These 3 Questions with Every Movement!

1. Are my symptoms becoming less intense?
2. Are my symptoms moving back to the center of the spine?
3. Am I now able to lean back farther?



**Good Movement!**



**Bad Movement!**

## Disc Recovery Movement

1

### Face Down Pillow Move

Lay face down on the bed or the floor. Put a pillow under your abdomen between your belly button and your hip. This movement uses gravity, time and traction to help the disc move back into place. You should not feel uncomfortable in this position. Remember to ask yourself the above three questions while in this position to assess whether this movement is right for you or not.



## Disc Recovery Movement

2

### Cobra Move

Lie on your belly. Put your arms and hands in position under you as if you are going into a cobra pose or a push up. Slowly push your upper body up until your arms are fully extended. Hold this position for 1-2 seconds. If this painful, stop immediately. Perform this movement 10 times.

Ask yourself the above questions while in this position to assess whether this movement is right for you or not.



### **CAUTION! Movement too Soon Will Set You Back.**

Your Chiropractor will help you find the best types of movement and in the proper sequence. Starting a movement program too soon can cause more harm than good. Learning how to move well and often will lay the foundation.



# STEP 4

## Seek Out a Chiropractor

### Chiropractic Care for Disc Injuries

Disc Injuries often respond well to chiropractic treatment. By seeking chiropractic treatment for a herniated or bulging disc, it is often possible to avoid unnecessary medication and surgery. Chiropractic treatments have helped many people get back to living comfortable, pain-free lives without needing to go under the knife. Once a disc diagnosis has been made, we will develop a comprehensive disc recovery plan designed to correct your problem and prevent recurrence. Your treatment may include chiropractic adjustments, lifestyle counseling, therapies, spinal decompression, laser and home exercises.



### Disc Decompression (Back On Trak)

Disc Decompression (BOT) is a non-surgical treatment to help in the management of serious low back/leg pain and neck/arm pain associated with herniated, bulging or deteriorated discs. BOT utilizes a traction system to gently stretch the body focused directly at the injured site. As the injured discs and joints are painlessly decompressed a vacuum effect is created. This vacuum effect allows the disc material that has protruded or herniated to be absorbed back into the disc space. Also, as the pressure is reduced proper blood, fluid and nutrient flow is restored, thus promoting a reduction in pain and natural healing of the injured site. Research of decompression technology found that the treatment provided relief in 86% of patients with ruptured discs. BOT is designed to correct the causes of your neck and low back pain, and not just treat the symptoms. Which is why BOT is a necessary part of your DISC RECOVERY plan.



## Strengthen Your Body.

Exercise is the medicine of the future. While it might not be advisable to lift heavy in the gym when you are suffering with severe back pain, exercise is an important part of this process. Research shows that exercise will help to speed up your healing. After the acute phase of your pain is over, we can build a custom workout program for you to help strengthen the muscles that wrap around your spine and discs. Strengthening your body once it is in proper alignment will not only help you prevent future injuries, but will allow you to do things you once thought were impossible.



## Recovering from Your Disc Injury is Possible

Follow this Guide!

### Disc Recovery is Here!

1. Understand your discs & how they move.
2. If you suspect a disc injury, follow our DO's & DON'TS advice.
3. Know the 3 DISC SAVING Posture Tips.
4. Take our 4 Disc Recovery Steps.



Summit Spine and Wellness is situated in the highest point of Philadelphia and is the number one center for drug-free pain relief and improving posture in the area. At Summit Spine and Wellness you will experience a different way of thinking about life, healing and wellness. Our passion is helping others in the community lead a more active and healthy life. Care is provided through an understanding and respect of the inborn natural intelligence inside each one of us. With a wide variety of services, Summit Spine and Wellness Center seeks to help members of the community, of all ages from newborns to elderly, achieve their full expression of life. Call (215) 487-2500 TODAY to schedule your initial appointment!

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