

Exercise key to preventing back pain

By Gretchen Reynolds, New York Times

Lower back pain is an almost universal if unwelcome experience. About 80 percent of those of us in the Western world can expect to suffer from disruptive lower back pain at some point in our lives. But if we begin and stick with the right type of exercise program, we might avoid a recurrence, according to a comprehensive new scientific review of back pain prevention.

Lower back pain develops for many reasons, including lifestyle, genetics, ergonomics, sports injuries, snow shoveling or just bad luck. Most often, in fact, the underlying cause is unknown.

For most people, a first episode of back pain will go away within a week or so.

However, back pain recurs with distressing frequency. By most estimates about 75 percent of people who have had one debilitating episode of lower back pain will have another within a year.

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