

BACK PAIN

Don't Suffer In Silence

(NAPSA)—Even though it's the second-most common reason for visiting a physician, the fifth most common reason for hospitalization and the third-most common reason for surgery, low-back pain is all too frequently dismissed as insignificant. In fact, it's a real problem that can restrict your activity and reduce your capacity to work and to enjoy daily living.

Back pain is also the second most frequent cause of lost work-days in adults under the age of 45 after the common cold. More than 26 million people between the ages of 20 and 64 have frequent or persistent back pain. It costs Americans more than \$50 billion a year in medical expenses and lost productivity.

Fortunately, there are a few things you can do if you're experiencing lower-back pain:

- Wear sneakers, or well-cushioned shoes, as much as possible. Alternate pairs and avoid high-tops for everyday wear, since they can weaken your ankles and restrict the motion of your feet.

- Always be aware of the position in which you're sitting if you have a desk job. Consider getting a chair that forces you to sit in the correct position.

- Talk to a doctor or chiropractor about an exercise program



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Back pain doesn't have to take over your life.

that can help you with a back pain problem; for instance, by building strength and increasing flexibility. Swimming is a low-impact exercise that strengthens all the muscle groups in your body.

If left untreated, lower back pain may actually worsen, so it is important that you visit a health care professional for an examination. Once a doctor has determined the cause of the pain, there are a number of therapeutic options open to you, from painkillers to exercise, rest, surgery or more unconventional approaches, such as acupuncture or biofeedback.

For more information, go to www.partnersagainstpain.com.