

Spine Pain (Neck and Back)

Spine health is critical in maintaining proper function, serving as the base from which all other joints move. Over 80% of people ages 20-65 will experience spine pain in their life, and it is the most common reason for physical therapy at UR Medicine / Noyes Health. As we age, education and exercise are key in repairing and maintaining good spine health.

Some Spine Issues Include:

Stenosis: A narrowing of the canals where nerves exit your spine, traveling toward your arms and legs. The nerves become compressed, causing neck and arm pain, and back and leg pain. This condition is common with aging.

Herniated Disc: Discs are fluid-filled sacs between your vertebrae that allow movement and flexibility of the spine. Commonly, discs bulge, pressing on adjacent nerves, which causes back/neck pain and pain, tingling, burning, and numbness in your arms and legs. As many as 85% of people over the age of 25 have some form of bulging disc, though many don't have symptoms. Through exercise and manual therapy, physical therapists can reduce disc bulging, abolishing your pain and symptoms. The most well-researched and respected treatment methodology in the world for spine care is the McKenzie Mechanical Diagnosis and Therapy approach. UR Medicine / Noyes Health offers McKenzie spine care at both locations.

Sciatica: Irritation of the sciatic nerve, the primary nerve that travels from your low back, down the back of your leg, to your foot.

What can physical therapy do for Neck or Back pain?

Current research supports the use of physical therapy for acute neck and back pain to decrease pain and speed recovery. Your therapist will identify the cause of your pain and develop an individualized program to reduce the pain. Research points to physical therapy in lowering healthcare costs if seen prior to an X-ray or MRI as often they are not needed for successful treatment outcomes. Chronic neck and back pain can also be treated effectively by physical therapy, using movement to decrease the threat your body sees to certain activities. The underwater treadmill in our Geneseo location typically works well for those having difficulty with land-based exercise.

A physical therapist can educate you in proper body mechanics for home and work activities, including lifting and workplace ergonomic modifications, that can assist in your recovery and decrease the chance of reoccurrence of symptoms.

Treatments for Neck or Back pain

McKenzie Mechanical Diagnosis and Therapy: The gold standard for evaluation and treatment of the spine. For more information, visit: <http://www.mckenzieinstitute.org/patients>

Mobilization/Manipulation: Hands-on therapy to create pain-free movement by decreasing tension caused by painful segments

Exercise: Targeted exercise improves strength and muscular timing which are key for long-term relief. Stretching is valuable neck, mid-back, and low back issues. Exercise is focused toward the spine and coordinating areas, such as the hips.

Traction: A device that applies a stretch to the spine over a period of time (usually 10-15 minutes), decreasing spasm and pain.