



Keeping  
British Columbians  
**Moving** for **Life**

PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION OF BC



# Back and Neck Pain

Doctors often refer their patients to physiotherapists for back and neck pain. There are many common causes ranging from poor posture, to injuries, to other health conditions.

## How Physiotherapists Help Back and Neck Pain

**Your physiotherapist will assess the causes for your back and neck pain, mobilize your spinal joints, and will give you advice on how to best maintain your thoracic mobility, essential for a healthy low back and neck.**

## Who are Physiotherapists?

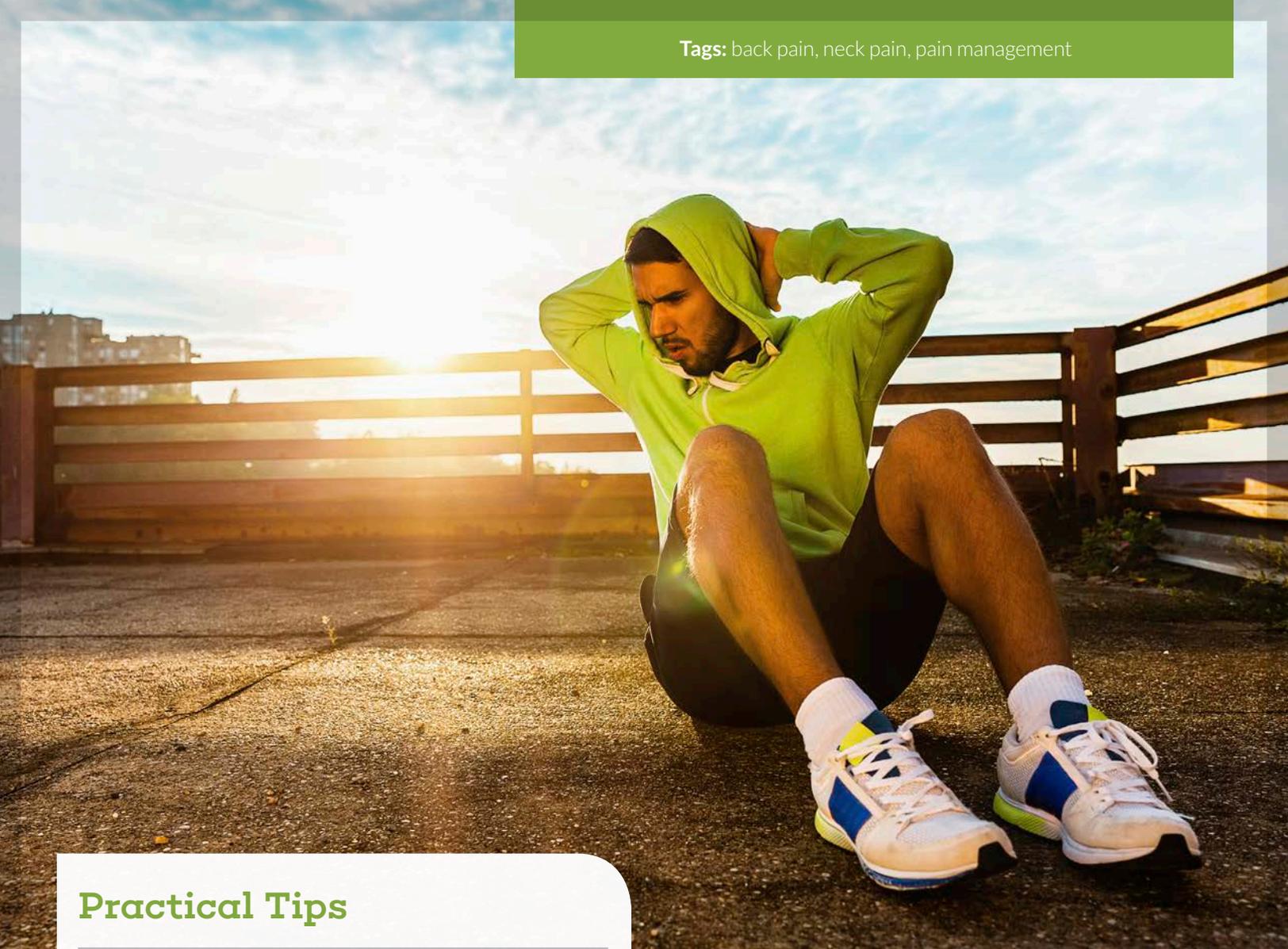
Physiotherapists are university trained medical professionals qualified to assess and treat the conditions that are affecting the body's movement system and function, and prescribe therapeutic exercise to sustain improved mobility. They are experts in treating back and neck conditions.



Your physiotherapist will start by providing you with a thorough examination of your spine and thoracic mobility. Using manual therapy and other treatment techniques, your physiotherapist will help you to regain lost mobility, provide you with instructions on how to achieve ideal postural alignment, and prescribe therapeutic exercises that will support your spine. They also prescribe suitable and safe stretches or "pause exercises," and provide tips on how you can correct your position when sitting at a computer.

Your physiotherapist can also refer you back to your family physician in cases where they suspect an underlying medical condition may be causing your back and neck pain that requires further investigation.

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## Practical Tips

- **Stay flexible.** Optimal spinal health means having flexibility in all directions. If your thorax has limited rotation movement, more load and stress can be transferred to your lower back, neck or other body parts. You can check your rotation by sitting in a chair with your arms crossed across your stomach; with a flexible spine, you should be able to turn equally to the right and left, and see behind yourself easily.
- **Vary positions at work.** Sitting at computers and desks all day puts increased pressure on your spine. After 30 minutes of sitting, make sure you get up and walk around to keep the flow of blood and fluids to the spine. You can also set up a standing workstation to vary your position while working at the computer. You should also make sure your work desk and computer are set up properly for sitting or standing, to encourage optimal posture.
- **Keep the core in check.** Regain optimal control of your deep spinal muscles (core) following an episode of neck or back pain with regular exercise to strengthen the core.

## For more information

To find a physiotherapist best for you, visit the PABC's website at [www.bcphysio.org](http://www.bcphysio.org) or download the **Find a Physio** app.

