

Tips for Nurses to Help Prevent Back Pain

Interventional Pain Management Specialist Dr. Kaliq Chang with Atlantic Spine Center offers tips to healthcare heroes to avoid a top job hazard.

WEST ORANGE, NJ, UNITED STATES, April 12, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Nursing is unquestionably grueling work, with these healthcare heroes spending shifts moving patients, lifting equipment, and bending over beds, stretchers and wheelchairs. Is it any wonder nurses are stricken with [lower back pain](#) more than any other profession, including heavy industrial jobs? But nurses can take proactive steps to avoid potentially disabling injuries affecting their backs, says [Dr. Kaliq Chang](#), of [Atlantic Spine Center](#).

While low back pain affects 8 in 10 adults in the United States at some point, the condition is even more common among nurses, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). As an occupation, nursing is most at risk from lower back pain, with as many as 90% of nurses reporting the problem, the NIH says.

“Research has indicated that nursing is the job that requires the most heavy lifting, and this single activity is the most significant risk factor for developing musculoskeletal injuries, especially in the lower back,” explains Dr. Chang, an interventional pain management specialist. “Even worse, lower back pain tends to return again and again among nurses, affecting their wellbeing and job satisfaction. It’s a major problem that needs to be addressed.”

Causes of back pain in nurses

Back pain in nurses doesn’t tend to result from one hard day on the job, Dr. Chang notes. Instead, repetitive motions and strain conspire to create a cumulative “insult” on the spine and surrounding muscles. What nursing duties are the culprits?

- Pushing and pulling patients onto stretchers and wheelchairs
- Dressing and bathing patients
- Transferring patients in and out of bed
- Lifting heavy equipment and supplies



Dr. Kaliq Chang



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- Bending over constantly or working in awkward positions
- Using vibrating patient care tools
- Standing for long periods without rest

“These motions and positions impact muscles, tendons, ligaments, and spinal discs in the back,” Dr. Chang explains, “and nurses’ resulting back pain can gradually develop over weeks, months or years.”

Prevention tips

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their ability to fight off back pain by taking proactive steps to strengthen their backs and reduce their job-related burdens. Dr. Chang offers these preventive tips:

- Use proper lifting techniques. “As when lifting any heavy object, lift your patients using your legs, not your back,” he says.
- Avoid overuse injuries. You likely can’t avoid repeatedly lifting patients out of bed, transferring them into wheelchairs, or helping them onto commodes. But when you do, use whatever equipment is at hand—including hoists or mechanical slings—to lessen your own physical strain.
- Apply heat and cold. A long day at work can be followed by a warm bath or a well-placed ice pack to help stem any twinges or jabs of pain in your back.
- Wear the right shoes. Supportive, slip-resistant shoes do more than keep your feet comfy while you work—they offer stability for your back muscles and stop you from possibly taking a tumble that can hurt your back.
- Strengthen your core. When core muscles in your abdomen and back are toned, they’re more likely to protect you from injuries that can lead to back pain. “Muscle weakness can contribute to back pain regardless of your occupation,” Dr. Chang says. “Pilates is a great way to target your core muscles in a fun and engaging way.”

Kaliq Chang, MD, is an interventional pain management specialist who’s board-certified in anesthesiology. He is in practice at Atlantic Spine Center.

Atlantic Spine Center is a nationally recognized leader for endoscopic spine surgery with several locations in NJ and NYC. <http://www.atlanticspinecenter.com>

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