

Sample Chapter from “STOP Back Pain!”

Why Muscle Relaxation Is the Key to Relief

“Those who say it cannot be done should not interrupt the person doing it.”

—Chinese proverb

Muscle relaxation is my favorite topic. I could talk for hours on how important it is to relax all of the muscles surrounding your spine, but it’s much more effective to show you. My “Three-Step Approach to Back, Neck and Sciatic Nerve Pain Relief” starts with this relaxation technique. Once your muscles are relaxed, you’ll feel better, have less pain and be able to start steps two and three: stretching and strengthening.

In the following pages you will see a photo of me in my living room, in the position that works miracles for relaxing your back muscles. You will also find photos of my friend, Ned, who uses a pillow as a prop for this position so that he gets the same benefits and uses the proper posture.

To begin, sit on the floor next to your couch or a chair. Then, lie down onto your back, placing your buttocks right against the couch or chair so that your thighs are perpendicular to the floor and your lower legs are resting comfortably on the furniture. It looks like a sitting position, but you’re on the floor in a sort of sideways sitting position. Now breathe... Continue breathing deeply for about five minutes.

In this position, your back is in a completely neutral position. The natural curve in your lower spine is intact and can rest, and all of the muscles in your back join in for some much needed R&R. Ahhhh... a lovely vacation for your back.

It’s essential to make sure that your lower legs are completely resting on the couch or chair. If they are at all tense, this position will not work as well as it should. Also, the deep breathing brings freshly oxygenated blood to all of the muscles that are finally relaxing enough to *receive* some of the much-needed oxygen. I recommend counting slowly to 5 or 6 while inhaling and then, even more slowly, counting to 7 or 8 on your exhale.

This is the remedy that I mentioned earlier that I am passionate about sharing with the whole world! Once you try it, you’ll also see the powerful effect of this one simple technique!

Now, if you can't lie flat on your back without arching your neck, place a small pillow or a rolled-up hand towel under your head, as Ned has done in the photographs. The reason this technique works so well is that your *entire* spine is in its natural, neutral position—and that includes your neck. Have someone check your posture to make sure you are in a comfortable, neutral position, using a pillow or towel if necessary, and then you'll be good to go.

Depending on your posture, you may need a bigger pillow. For instance, when my brother, Pat, was undergoing cancer treatments, he was stuck in a hunched over position in a chair for months, so he became very round shouldered. His back hurt all the time, so in addition to my niece and I using healing touch and Reiki on his back, I showed him this technique for relaxing his back muscles. At first, he needed a large pillow to achieve the correct position, but as his posture improved, he was able to use a smaller pillow. Pat also wore a back brace during the day—one like you see delivery men wear for lifting heavy packages. These two accommodations helped him to correct his posture and relieve his back pain so that he could begin an exercise program and gain back his strength. He's almost back to his old self again!



This is me with my back in a good position.



This is Ned with his neck arched—not good.



Here he is with a small pillow under his head—not his neck, his head. See what a big difference it makes?

I should say a word about gadgets for relaxing your back. The SacroWedgy® is a gadget based upon the principle of relaxing your muscles to find relief, as is the Back2Life® massager (as seen on TV). I do not recommend spending the money for these expensive gadgets when you can find relief using your own couch and a blanket, *but* if you are one of those people who simply *must* have gadgets, I guess you could give them a try!

There are a couple of important reasons that my “Three-Step Approach to Relieving Back, Neck or Sciatic Nerve Pain” begins with relaxing all the muscles in your back. First, when back muscles are relaxed, this releases some of the pressure on all of your spinal nerves, which helps to ease the pain. We are often our own worst enemy. Our muscles automatically tense when we’re in pain as a way to protect the area. However, this automatic response can cause even more pressure on the sciatic or other spinal nerves—making the pain worse! And the longer those muscles are tensed, the more difficult it becomes to relax them, causing a vicious circle of pain and more pain. Second, with less pain, you are able to stretch, massage and exercise to strengthen your back. Let’s face it—no one wants to exercise when in excruciating pain!

Now that you know the number one best way in the universe to relax all of your back muscles to relieve your pain, you’re ready for the second and third steps in my Three-Step Approach: stretching and strengthening!

Taken from **[STOP Back Pain – Kiss Your Back Neck and Sciatic Nerve Pain Goodbye](#)** by Kathi Casey, ERYT, CPI, Reiki Master

For More information on getting Kathi’s help for your back pain with *personalized* coaching, contact Kathi at info@HealthyBoomerBody.com