

What Causes Back Problems?

Back trouble can be postural (how you stand, sit, lie down, and move), emotional, related to work and living environment, caused by trauma, or genetic. Most back problems are related to posture and lifestyle.

- ❖ Tight hamstrings – pelvis tilts backwards (lower back rounds). This puts enormous strain on spinal disks.
- ❖ Tight hip rotators - tightness interferes with the pelvic movement and force is transferred up to the next movable segment – the lumbar spine.
- ❖ Back extensors are weak (along spine). Weak erector spinae muscles cause slumping.
- ❖ Weakness in abs – sway back. The importance of strengthening and engaging the core.
- ❖ Excessive flexibility in joints.
- ❖ Over-stretching the hamstrings without equally stretching the quads. Yoga should include more back-bends than forward-folds.
- ❖ Psoas tightness causing imbalance in pelvis.
- ❖ Excessive sitting. Pay close attention to how you sit/stand/drive/sleep/move.
- ❖ Dehydration. Drink 8-10 glasses of water a day, throughout the day. Sipping hot water all day long will decrease Vata and nourish the spine.
- ❖ Increased Vata . The seat of Vata is the colon and lower back.
- ❖ Mental tension. It is important to get to the root cause and shift into restorative, parasympathetic.

Benefits of yoga for your back:

- ❖ Increased circulation, moving nutrients to cells and removing toxins.
- ❖ Stretching, bending, wringing, and soaking the disks.
- ❖ Deep breathing that provides gentle spinal massage, sending nutrients to the disks.
- ❖ Standing poses that loosen the hip joints and stretch all major muscle groups around the hips (rotators, quads, adductors, and hamstrings). Use of props can maximize the therapeutic benefits.
- ❖ Pranayama (breath practice), meditation, and shavasana (deep relaxation) to trigger the parasympathetic/relaxation response which reduces stress and helps to create a sense of inner health and well being.
- ❖ Yoga done with good alignment results in significant, long-term improvement. Some studies have demonstrated that it was the most successful of all approaches to back relief.