

# What A Pain In The Back!!!

**Travis Hacker, PT, DPT**  
**Doctor of Physical Therapy**  
**Isanti Physical Therapy**

As the snow flies and the temperature drops, we all seem to take a more sedentary level of activity. That is until we HAVE to go out and do the chores, shovel the walk or ride the snowmobile. No matter what you are doing, they can all lead to pain in your lower back area-that area right where you have to reach around to tuck the shirt into your pants.

There are many things that can lead to this pain, including sitting down too long in the recliner watching that new reality show, bending over wrong to get your boots on, shoveling the snow, the list goes on and on. There are also a ton of things you can do to combat this pain before it starts. The first and most important thing is to stay active. The worst thing for your back is to not do anything for a few weeks and then throw on the weekend warrior shoes and take on the neighborhood kids in a game of football or go out and lift those few sacks of dog food that have been in the garage and need to go into the basement.

Another thing to remember are to lift with those knees and not that back!!! There is a lot of stress put onto your back when you bend at your waist and pick something up. SO, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, BEND AT YOUR KNEES!!!

If you do feel a tight spot in your back, grab a friend/significant other/etc. and have them massage on the tight spot for 10-15 minutes. This will give you some good alone time to talk about whatever-how bad the Vikes are playing this year (but we are still better than the Packers!!!).

One way to keep your back nice and lubed up everyday is to do a GOOD MORNING STRETCH as you look at yourself in the mirror. To do this stand up and put your hands on your hips. Now lean backwards until you feel a stretch. Hold it for 5-10 seconds. Then just come back to the middle. That is it. What I like to do is to then lean to the right and then to the left holding each one for about 5-10 seconds once again.

Another stretch you should do is for the muscles on the back of your legs-your hamstrings. Sit on a couch or the side of the bed, now turn to your left and kick your left leg up onto the couch with your right one still on the floor. Now reach forward to your toes until you feel a stretch in the back of your left leg. Hold for 15 seconds. Now switch and do the same thing but looking to your right and kick your right leg up.

Last but not least, go out and take a walk. Start out going a few times a week for 5-10 minutes at a time, and work your way up to 30 minutes a day. This will help with keeping you active, controlling your weight, time to think about things and also to wave at your friends. So, go out there and keep your back healthy!!