



**THERE IS NO NORMAL PAIN**  
Understand your options. Conquer Your Pain.

LARRY R MONTGOMERY, D.C.

# There Is No Normal Pain

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### Part I: Normal Pain

**Normal:** Conforming with, adhering to, or constituting a norm; typical. *Normal room temperature; one's normal weight.*

Jody H used to tell me about her “normal migraines.” I would see her at lunch at least once per week and half the time she would have that “I’m in pain” look. Light irritated her eyes, a loud noise would cause her to grab her head. She moved slowly in an effort to prevent the “jar” of a normal step to her head. Her weeks were spent taking medication and typically missing work one to two days per week. Invariably when I spoke to her and her husband, she would say, “The doctors say that are just the normal migraines.” Then, she surprised me.

One day, while treating patients, I saw her bent over my reception desk. The headache had become so bad that finally, she understood it wasn’t “normal!” I now love seeing Jody periodically. Even she will tell you that her migraines were not “normal.” She has conquered her pain!

I wish I could tell you that Jody is the only person to tell me about “normal pain”. Unfortunately, she is only one of a legion of misinformed, misguided and over-medicated who live with unnecessary pain.

### There is No Normal Pain

Normal pain. To use those two words together is an oxymoron. Yet patient after patient are confounded by that statement. Since 1981, I have heard people who enter our clinic say, “Oh, I just have the normal headaches”, or “I just have the normal lower back pain” or, “You know, it is just the neck pain everyone has at



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the end of the day.” It is sad that in the most advanced society in the history of the world, we have allowed ourselves to be convinced that there is a *normal* pain.

Not only does the average person believe that pain is normal, they also believe that if they take a medication or place the affected body part into a position that relieves the pain, this indicates they are well. Usually these beliefs come from a desire to return to normal activities as a result of the person not having time to either be unhealthy or to get well. This belief will, most likely, cause more future pain and disability for our population than any other cause.

**Key Concept:** *Pain serves as a warning, a guide, and a learning tool for how we treat our bodies.*

### Pain As a Warning

Pain is most often a warning that something is definitely outside the norm for our bodies. Recently at my deer lease, I was enjoying one of my favorite experiences; camping. Sitting next to the camp fire, after dark, with no light but the coals from the burning fire. There was a slight chill in the air, an old percolator pot sitting over the fire filled with coffee soon to be ready. With eager anticipation, I reached down and grabbed the handle of the pot, lifting it approximately two feet before my brain said, “Doc, the handle also became hot, while the coffee was brewing!”

I took the burn in exchange for not spilling the coffee. Was the pain I experienced normal? Placing your skin against something that is too hot is not a normal human action. Believe me, I won’t grab the coffee pot without a glove or towel, again.

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### Pain As a Guide

Pain can also be a guide for how we treat our bodies. Many *gym rats*, or athletes, enter the clinic with significant soreness as a result of their workouts. They subscribe to the thought, “If running one mile is good, running 20 miles is better!” Research shows nothing of the sort. Workouts which produce significant soreness within the body are most likely doing more harm than benefit.

When you workout and have some mild soreness that doesn’t restrict your range of motion or strength, your body is informing you that your workout is adequate. However, discomfort, soreness, etc., that makes you “roll out of bed” or prevents you from raising your arms to wash your hair in the shower, is definitely a guide to your body that you are overdoing it.

Appropriate adjustments to the workout should be made to a more gradual path to conditioning. However, most people attempt to become conditioned in a shortest possible time period. The result is pain that serves as a learning tool.

### Part II: Types of Pain

Now you know pain is not normal. Here’s a guide to help you understand your *abnormal* pain.

**Localized** - This is pain that is in one area. For instance, it does not start in the neck and radiate to the fingers. If it is in the neck, it stays in the neck. Often, localized pain is the first thing to occur before radiating pain begins.



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**Radiating**- This pain begins in one location and travels to another. For instance, you will often hear of people with lower back pain that radiates into the leg (called sciatica) and this is a form of radiating pain. This pain typically follows a *nerve pathway* or dermatome.

However, there is a specific type of pain, call *scleratogenous pain*, that does not follow nerve pathways. This type of radiating pain is often seen after automobile accidents and specific patterns of pain have been identified.

**Important:** *This type of radiating pain has and often mistakenly caused many people to be labeled as "faking" their injuries. In fact, we now know that this type of pattern **does exist.***

**Muscular** – Muscle pain typically comes from a strain of the muscle. These are “rated” as “Grade I, II and III Muscle strains.”

**Grade I** – Strain of the muscle where it is stretched beyond it’s normal physiological length, however there is NO tearing of the muscle fibers.

**Grade II** – This strain is defined as a stretching of the muscle to the point where between 1 and 99% of the muscle fibers are actually torn.

**Grade III** – 100 % of the muscle fibers are torn. Typically rare, but fairly easy to diagnose. Unlike grade I and II, this grade may require surgical intervention. Once

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this type of injury occurs, the symptoms of muscle strain include:

- Muscle pain and tenderness, especially after an activity that stretches or violently contracts the muscle. Pain usually increases when you move the muscle but is relieved by rest.
- Muscle swelling, discoloration or both
- Muscle cramp or spasm ( read more on this below)
- A decrease in muscle strength or (in Grade III strains) a complete loss of muscle function
- A "pop" in the muscle at the time of injury
- A gap, dent or other defect in the normal outline of the muscle (in Grade III strain)

### Muscle Spasm Type Pain

Most people mistakenly think that a muscle spasm is a condition itself. However, muscle spasms are a defense mechanism to something else that is occurring in the body. The absolute worst treatment of muscle spasm is to give a medication to relieve these spasms, without addressing the underlying cause of muscle spasm.

In almost every case of muscles spasm, a nerve passing out of the spine is being irritated. To protect that nerve from further damage, the body sends muscles into spasm to restrict motion and prevent further irritation of the nerve. In effect, the body places a “splint” of muscular spasm on the injured area to reduce motion.

Many people use medication to remove the body’s natural defense, before



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addressing the underlying cause of the muscle spasm. This allows the patient to return to activity too soon, ultimately causing more damage to the nerve and leading to future complications in the involved area.

### Joint/Arthritic

Joint pain and progressive stiffness without noticeable swelling, chills, or fever during normal activities probably indicate the gradual onset of **osteoarthritis**. Painful swelling, inflammation, and stiffness in the fingers, arms, legs, wrists occurring in the same joints on both sides of the body, especially on awakening, may be signs of **rheumatoid arthritis**.

Fever, joint inflammation, tenderness, and sharp pain, sometimes accompanied by chills and associated with an injury or another illness, may indicate **infectious arthritis**.

In children, intermittent fever, loss of appetite, **weight loss**, and anemia or blotchy rash on the arms and legs may signal **juvenile rheumatoid arthritis**.

### Nerve

Nerves are responsible for transferring *every type of pain sensation* to the brain. Nerve pain symptoms can include numbness, “pins and needles” or burning sensations, and pain radiating outward from the injured area (called radiating or “radicular” pain).

One of the most common symptoms of a compressed nerve is the feeling of having an extremity (foot or hand) “fall asleep.” Technically, this is referred to paraesthesia or hypoesthesia, yet the patient may also refer to this as *pins and*



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*needles, numbness* or other such descriptive terms.

### Part III: Painful Excuses

I have good news and bad news; The good news is that none of the following statements could be farther from the truth, as none of them are a legitimate reason for pain. For the majority, relief of pain is possible. The bad news is that people suffer needlessly, thinking some pain is normal.

**Excuse #1: "It's just my age."** – I once had a patient consult me for lower back pain. While we were talking, I noticed his right knee was twice as large as his left. When we finished his history concerning his back, I asked,

*"What happened to the right knee?"*

He replied, *"Oh, nothing; it is just my age."*

I smiled and said, *"No, really, what happened to your right knee?"*

He replied, *"Nothing, it is just my age."*

I then inquired, *"Well, sir, I am curious; Exactly how old is your left knee?"*

Until that moment, he didn't realize that age was not the reason his right knee was swollen to twice the size of his left.

**Excuse #2: "It's just Arthritis."** – This is the most common reason people give for pain, particularly in their spine. When patients give "arthritis" as their previous diagnosis, I ask, "Did they diagnose this by doing spinal imaging (x-rays), blood work or CAT / MRI scan?" The usual answer: "No, I told them I hurt and they said it was probably arthritis!"



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**Excuse #3: "it's just my nerves."** – Here is a guarantee...if you have pain, it is your nerves! Nerves are tissue that send the message to the brain to create pain sensations. However, what most people mean when they say this, is that their pain is a result of stress within their lives. While it is true that emotional stress can be responsible for deteriorating health, diminished immune system function and other pain syndromes, ***stress typically does not cause physical pain.***

**Excuse #4: "I thought it would go away."** – Lastly, these six words are responsible for a great deal of suffering. People, in an effort to be *stoic, manly* or *tough*, delay treatment until the problem escalates to a debilitating condition. Take care of injuries as they arise. Don't delay.

### Mechanical Causes of Pain

**Sitting** – Our society has moved from one that was eternally active to one that increasingly sits to perform it's occupation and "recreation". Our backs were never meant to be in this position for long periods of time. This combined with the weakening of the main support muscles which occurs from too much sitting, is a major factor in the increasing amount of spinal problems within our society.

**Computers** – Computers are the major reason people are sitting more. It must be remembered that your computer workstation must be specifically fit to your body type. A work environment where computer workstations are shared and not customized is a recipe for repetitive stress injury.

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**Repetitive Stress Injuries** – RSI or *Repetitive Stress Injuries* result from a schedule which includes playing a sport in season, and then off-season. More and more young people experiencing RSI as a result of specializing in one sport, to the exclusion of all others. Young bodies are designed to participate in a variety of activities.

**Gravity** – Gravity is a problem for many conditions, particularly spinal curvatures. The problem is there is no cure for gravity, therefore we must condition our body to accept the affects of gravity. Diet, exercise, relaxation, recreation are the proper care of the human frame.

### Part IV: There Is No Normal Pain

Your body is an amazing creation: The neurology, chemistry and mechanical functions at play are stunning. In the midst of this complexity, the brain controls the harmonious function (homeostasis) of all the tissues and organs, in such a way that barring injury, *you should not feel pain.*

#### Tips to Relieve and Prevent Pain

**Headache** – The great majority of headaches are the result of one of two causes: ***mechanical misalignments*** in the neck or ***nutritional deficiencies***. Migraine headaches are thought to be due in part, to the dilation of blood vessels in the head. Patients with headaches need to be evaluated by health care provider which are trained in both areas.



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**Lower Back Pain** – There are four major ways to prevent lower back pain:

**1. Maintain your normal body weight:** Most chronic lower back pain patients are overweight and many have a pendulous abdomen (a stomach that hangs over the belt or pant line). This places abnormal stress on the joint in the lower back.

**2. Maintain strong abdominal muscles:** A person with normal weight and strong abdominal muscles typically has to do something very strenuous to injure their lower back.

**3. Maintain strong gluteal muscles and conditioned legs:** To test the condition of your legs, sit in a straight-back chair with your arms hanging freely to your side. A person with adequately conditioned legs should be able to rise from a seated to a standing position.

**4. Use proper lifting mechanics:** While there are several parts to proper lifting mechanics, there is one particular *don't* in lifting. Never bend down to lift with the legs straight and the back twisted to one side. This position greatly weakens the disc and is the main lifting position that will lead to a herniated disc.

**Neck Pain** – True neck pain can cause many additional problems including headaches, pain into the arms or hands. Frequently, other, seemingly non-related symptoms will occur, such as sore throats, ear problems, balance problems and even indigestion or heart palpitations.

**Prevention of neck pain** includes having *any* injury checked as soon as possible without neglect, instituting a preventative exercise program if your neck is

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subject to repetitive stress. Correct any postural problems.

**Carpal Tunnel Syndrome** – 67% of people who develop CTS, have had a prior neck injury or condition. Computers have complicated this condition and accelerated its growth as it may eventually it may surpass lower back pain as the number one complaint of injured workers. **Preventing CTS** involves correcting incorrect posture, utilizing tools modified to reduce stress and strain to the body as well as education in preventative exercises for the neck, shoulders, elbows, wrist and hands.

### Part V: Conquer Your Pain

It is very simple to conquer your pain, yet very complex. Your pain is coming from one of three sources: ***mechanical, chemical or emotional***. If your pain persists long enough, it will involve all three. This is the triune of your body, your health and your life..

Finding the underlying source of your pain is the key to conquering your pain.



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The first step is to find the source of your pain, the second is take the steps to heal that source.

### Your Body's Protection Mechanism

The body tries to protect us (at least how we feel) in that it will change shapes, change positions and do everything it can before pain finally begins. Additionally, once the irritant which causes pain is removed, pain will go away quickly, leading us to believe we are well. Just as with a broken arm, pain typically is gone within 3 – 4 days after it is placed in a cast, yet doctors leave the arm in the cast for 6 weeks to insure healing. This principle should be applied to the entire body. If a muscle tears, it is usually pain free within a week, however it is not ready to resume full activities for approximately 6 weeks!

### Conquering Pain of Chemical Origin

Conquering pain which is caused by an imbalance in your chemistry is typically a combination of subtraction and addition. Often we find there are chemical influences from a person's environment or a poor diet which are responsible for altering a person's chemistry to the point which it causes pain. These must be eliminated from the person's body to bring about a balance in the chemistry. In other cases, a person will present that has long been deficient in vitamins, minerals or nutrients which are vital to health. These chemicals must be added to balance the chemistry of the body and relieve pain.

### Conquering Pain of Emotional Origin

Most pain with an emotional component has a chemical or mechanical factor involved, but there are also several incidences in which pain has only an emotional component. Often a person will be put in situations of extreme stress which can

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result in pain throughout the body. When the stress is relieved the pain goes away.

For me, a temporary stressful situation is driving in big-city traffic. I will get tightness across my shoulders and sometimes a lump in my throat! However, in most cases, once I am removed from the stress, the tension and pain go away. Yet, there are other cases in which the exposure to stress or abuse is over a long period of time and this can not only cause long term ramifications in the psyche, but also changes in the chemical and mechanical function of the body.

### Conquering Pain of Mechanical Origin

Pain of mechanical origin is rampant within our society and can have multiple causes and solutions. A proper structural examination looks at every facet of patient posture. This begins at the foundation, which, of course, is the feet and progresses upward through the knees, hips, pelvis, spine including the shoulders and ribs and the skull. Interestingly, in the cohesive way the body was designed, a postural problem of the feet can cause headaches and a misalignment of the skull can cause leg pain! Therefore, an examination of the skeleton is incomplete without inclusion of the entire skeleton. Once this is performed, the structure must be balanced to relieve the pain caused by alter “biomechanics” of the body!

Isn't it time that you found out the source of your pain, today? On the follow pages review the list of symptoms to identify the source of your pain. Then, visit your local chiropractor or call our office for a no-obligation initial consultation.



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Look at the signs below to help identify the cause of your pain:

### Mechanical

Neck Pain  
Mid-back Pain  
Low-back Pain  
Loss of Strength in Legs  
Numbness to arms  
Numbness to legs  
Pain in Arms  
Pain in Legs  
Loss of Strength in Arms  
High Shoulder  
High Ear  
High Hip  
Short Leg  
Uneven Shoe Wear

### Chemical

Pain after eating certain foods  
Awaking at night with headaches  
Pain that occurs only in certain locations  
Pain initiated by certain odors  
Chronic Fatigue  
Excessive Thirst  
Excessive Appetite  
Over/Under Weight  
Bruising  
Indigestion  
Diarrhea  
Constipation  
Anemia  
Muscle Cramping

### Emotional

Depression  
Discouragement  
Insomnia  
Fatigue  
Impotence  
Thoughts of self destruction  
Loss of Libido  
Disorientation  
Impaired Judgement  
Mood Swings  
Irritability  
Anxiety  
Fear

**Please note:** many of these symptoms may be due to multiple causes of pain.

### What Next?

If you have decided that you want to find and conquer the source of your pain for a better life, then we invite you to ***Join the Pain Relief Revolution!*** Call the office of Montgomery Chiropractic and schedule a no-obligation initial consultation. We will help you determine the source of your pain and give you options to overcome it.





### Larry R Montgomery, D.C.

Dr. Larry Montgomery founded Montgomery Chiropractic in Belton, Texas in September, 1981 after graduating from Parker Chiropractic Research Foundation with a Doctor of Chiropractic Degree.

Dr. Montgomery has received numerous advanced degrees and certifications and is a member of several chiropractic professional organizations. In addition, Dr. Montgomery has held numerous offices, including President Texas Chiropractic Association from 1998-1999.

He is active in the Belton community and his Church. Dr. Montgomery married Priscilla Kenisell in May of 1982 and they have two sons: Micah and Malachi.

