

Helping That Pain in Your Neck (and Back)

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

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It's estimated that 80 percent of Americans will experience back or neck pain at some time in their lives, with billions of dollars spent each year to either treat the pain or because of lost productivity due to it.

Any number of activities can cause you to tweak your back – everything from shoveling snow and raking leaves to dancing too much in high of heels. Instead of heading the emergency department, consider getting your back checked at an early evaluation clinic if you have had acute onset of back pain within the last month or two – even within the past week - and it's not going away.

SOT Diana France – Advanced Practice Nurse | OSF HealthCare Illinois Neurological Institute

(We see a multitude or a number of different patient types. Obviously they have one thing in common or two things neck or back pain, but the age range is pretty great anywhere from late teens 20s thirties to 60s 80s :22)

V/O: Diana France is an Advanced Practice Provider with the OSF HealthCare Illinois Neurological Institute back and neck early evaluation clinic. The team includes a cross-section of experts, including physical therapists, who can get you moving in the right direction. France says when someone has neck or back pain your body prefers one movement over another and the goal is to get you moving in the direction your body prefers in order to help get your pain under control. The team works to avoid surgical solutions unless absolutely necessary.

But if a person has “red flags,” that may require additional testing and treatment.

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(If they come in with something that we think is a red flag which would include of you know muscle weakness in an extremity - arm or a leg - sometimes if they have changes and in their bowel or bladder, loss of control or that kind of thing then we kind of skip over the treatments and do imaging to make sure that there isn't anything pressing on the spinal nerves or the spinal cord. :28)

V/O: What are some of the best ways to keep your neck and back strong and as pain free as possible? Diana France says exercise if you can - keeping your core, back and spinal muscles strong - maintaining a healthy weight and lifestyle, and above all – keep moving.

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(When we become stagnant then our muscles typically get lazy and they don't support our spine like they should or you know like they were designed to do so it is important I think to continue to move if you can. There are patients out there who have chronic issues with spine and it makes it difficult for them to move it makes it difficult to participate in their activities of daily living and stuff. The goal of our office or our clinic is to prevent acute spine pain from turning into a chronic issue for them. :40)

As a one-stop shop, the INI back and neck clinic can prescribe stronger anti-inflammatory medications if necessary and easily access neurosurgeons, if your condition warrants it, while avoiding a trip to the emergency department. Learn more through the [OSF HealthCare Illinois Neurological Institute](#).