

## LOW BACK PAIN

About 8 in 10 people suffer from back pain at some point in their lives. In most cases, it is not a serious disease or problem. This is called nonspecific back pain. However, we should check a doctor's diagnosis, or ask the patient to see a doctor to eliminate more serious possibilities such as a slipped disk (disk hernia) This pain may become chronic.

The back is a delicate area of muscles, nerves, bones and joints and is continuously working hard to support the weight of the upper body. Lower back pain is often triggered by everyday activities such as bending awkwardly, lifting incorrectly, standing for long periods of time, slouching when sitting and driving for long periods without taking breaks.

If the pain extends down the leg, then the proper diagnosis would be sciatica. The sciatic nerve is the longest nerve in your body and runs from the back of your pelvis, through your buttocks, and all the way down both legs, ending at your feet. The most common cause of sciatica is a slipped disc.

## TESTS

### 1. Medical history.

- a) Where is the pain, area, left or right side, etc.
- b) Acute or chronic. How long.
- c) What time is better or worse, i.e. in the morning, after sitting, after exercise, etc.
- d) Sleep position

### 1. Observation.

- a) Look at the body from the side to assess the curves of the spine and check if there is khyphosis (hunched back) or lordosis (arched lower back).
- b) Assess symmetry of shoulders.
- c) Check symmetry of feet angle.

### 2. Palpation.

- a) Check if iliac crests have equal level.
- b) Palpate very carefully the spine and sacroiliac joints for spasm and tenderness.

### 3. Range of motion. (Back and neck)

- a) Flexion (while forward bending assess scoliosis)
- b) Extension
- c) Lateral flexion
- d) Rotation.

4. Gait.

If pain occurs while walking on heels the problem is on L5, if it occurs while walking on toes on S1.

5. Supine assessment.

a) Check leg length differences (inner malleolus)

b) External hip rotation test. Sacroiliac joint pain indicates a problem in this area, while groin pain indicates iliopsoas strain or bursitis.

c) Straight leg raise test (Lasègue test). Pain after 30 degrees rise indicates sciatica.

d) Manual lumbar traction (see figure below)



## SHIATSU TREATMENT

1. Head should not be turned to one side. Either work on a couch with a face hole or on the patient's side if working on a futon.

2. Avoid inflamed areas.

3. Treatment should not exceed 40 minutes. Overtreating a person with back pain can result in worse back pain.

4. Manual lumbar traction.

5. Manual neck traction.

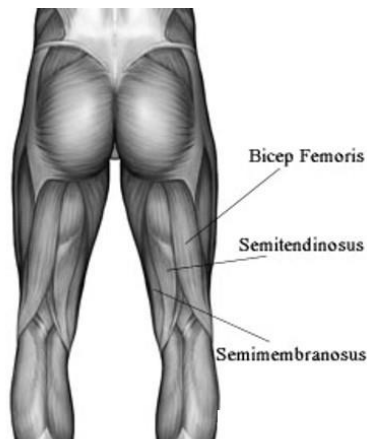
6. Rotate toes and ankles. For hip rotations, always begin on the side which is not painful. Don't do them if they cause any pain.

7. Sotai exercises. Always think which ones you are going to recommend to do at home. We usually begin with sotai 1, 2 and/or 3, but remember that sotai exercises must be adapted for the person.

プロ  
指  
圧  
学  
校

8. Always pay attention to kyo/jitsu (hypertonicity/hypotonicity of muscles, whether they are hard or soft) to change pressure accordingly (fast and light for hard muscles, deep and slow for soft muscles)

9. Prone. Important areas: upper back (interscapular lines, infraspinous fossa, inner and outer border of scapula), sacrum/gluteus (inner and outer sacroiliac lines, gluteal lines, Namikoshi point), back of thigh (hamstring muscles, work the whole area a lot)

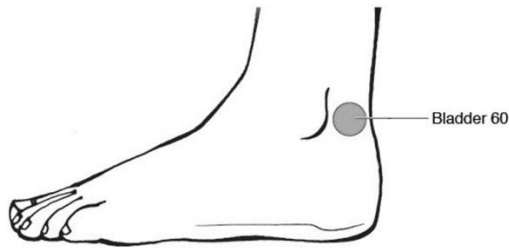


10. Calf muscles (soleus and gastrocnemius)



プロ  
指  
圧  
学  
校

11. Outer malleolus line (important point: Bladder 60)



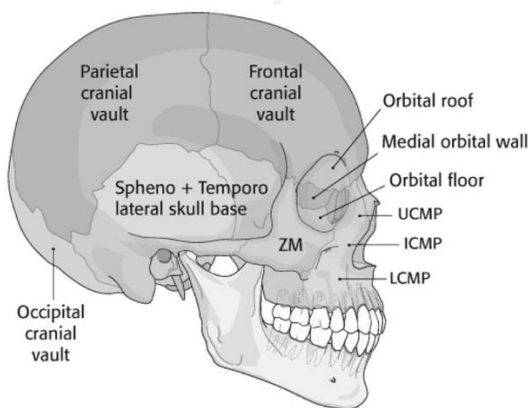
12. Work the affected area towards the end. Adjust your pressure so that it is not painful. Always begin on side which is not painful.

13. Manual back traction. Manual Neck traction. Second time

14. Supine. Important areas: front of thigh (especially the outer line of the anterior femoral lines, part of the stomach meridian in TCM), abdomen (small and medium circles especially, eight and twelve points respectively), intermetatarsal space (channels on the feet), intermetacarpal space (channels on the hand) and neck

15. Pulling toes.

16. Suboccipital points (under base of skull, under occipital cranial vault). Stay from one minute to two minutes.



## POST-TREATMENT ADVICE

1) First and most important explain that the pain may be a bit worse the day after. This, of course, is not unique to shiatsu, it may happen with any manual therapy. They should not worry and see if the pain becomes **less** than when they came to see us two days after treatment.

2) Personalised sotai exercises.

3) For the worst cases, teach the person how to get up, sit down and lie down.

4) Regular exercise, such as walking and swimming, is an excellent way of preventing back pain. Activities such as yoga or pilates can improve your flexibility and strengthen your back muscles.

4) Ask the person to pay attention to everyday activities such as sitting at a desk, lifting, etc.

PROFESSIONAL  
SHIATSU  
SCHOOL

プロ  
指  
圧  
学  
校