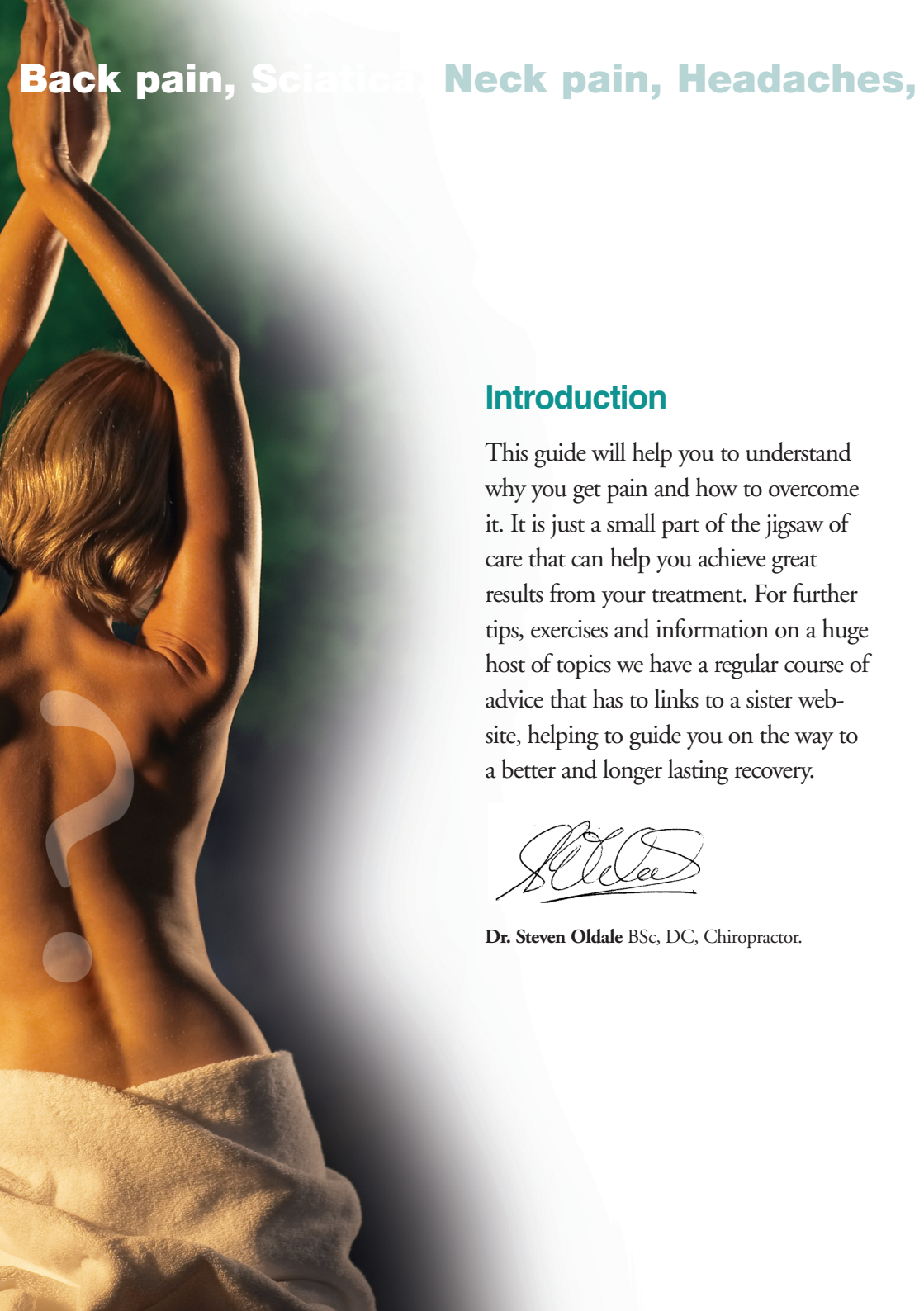




Chiropractic Clinic

**Your guide to a healthier,  
mobile, painfree body**



# Back pain, Sciatica, Neck pain, Headaches,

## Introduction

This guide will help you to understand why you get pain and how to overcome it. It is just a small part of the jigsaw of care that can help you achieve great results from your treatment. For further tips, exercises and information on a huge host of topics we have a regular course of advice that has links to a sister website, helping to guide you on the way to a better and longer lasting recovery.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Dr. Steven Oldale'.

**Dr. Steven Oldale** BSc, DC, Chiropractor.

# Whiplash, Migraine, Arm Pain, Sports Injuries

## A Brief History Of Your Back Pain

Because we have to balance a column of bones, it requires great control and a good healthy nervous system working in unison with mobile joints and strong muscles. Unfortunately in real life this rarely exists and we end up with pain.

### What Causes These Problems?

Due to the way the body is designed certain areas of the spine move more than others. For instance, as a whole the rib-cage is relatively stiff when compared to the neck and lumbar spine. In addition, within an area of spine, for instance Lumbar, there is considerable variation in movement. The upper lumbar vertebrae don't twist much, as they are better at flexing forwards and backwards, but the lowest does. In fact the lowest is good at moving in all directions. This means it takes the majority of the strain and this is the main reason we get low back pain. A similar thing occurs in the mid-neck. Hence a pain in the neck or pain in the backside, we don't hear people say "he's a pain in the ribs".

### How Does My Lifestyle Affect Back Pain?

The modern lifestyle—sedentary work, driving, lack of exercise etc --- causes stress and strain that locks up some of the joints, usually in the stiffest areas, such as the top of the back and the base of the rib-cage. This occurs due to an imbalance in the muscles and the way we move and bend particularly in this modern environment.

For example if you are sat at a desk all day, after driving to work, then drive home, then sit on a sofa,

your spine is generally flexed forwards all day. Over time this will cause the muscles and ligaments at the chest to shorten and the muscles and ligaments at the back to lengthen, a shortened muscle is more powerful, an elongated muscle is weaker. This means we start to find it harder to hold ourselves up.

Repeat this for 365 days a year for a number of years and we become stooped and inflexible in the mid back and shoulders. This causes excessive stress and movement at the mid-neck as we crane our heads upwards to see where we are going, and excessive movement in the base of the spine as we are still mobile at these levels.

Then the deep spinal muscles, that are having to work harder to support that joint become fatigued and they may then begin to tense up and become tender from the effort. This increase in pain causes further spasm and tightening which in turn reduces the information and feedback from that joint.

### So Why Does The Back Give Out?

In order to have a healthy back you need the nerves that control movement to be functioning well, often the reflexes controlling this go wrong. Why? You are very likely to have had numerous falls throughout your life. These can cause minor damage and change the way you move on a very subtle level. Over time the repeated high loads of bending and twisting cause excessive movements in some joints and muscles will tighten to prevent this. These muscle contractions can lock up other areas and cause further stress.



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In addition when a joint is stiff you lose feedback from the sensors that cover the joint capsule, ligaments and muscles, so while your nervous system thinks it is controlling things it is actually slightly out of tune and can either fail to react enough to a force or overdo it.

All of our skeletal tissues have a varying degree of these sensors, which detect force and movement. They are called mechano-receptors. They constantly send information into the spinal cord that tell our bodies where our joints are, how tight are muscles are, how fast we are moving and in what direction. Without those nerves we wouldn't be aware of where our bodies were in time and space. So for example if you went to scratch your nose you might end up poking your finger in your ear.

In fact that sense is so important if we didn't have it and you shut your eyes you wouldn't even know you had a body, you would literally just be a mind.

When we get older, are intoxicated or have an injury we lose the quality of this feedback. So, not only do the joints seize up from prolonged postures or from injury due to a protective spasm, they also become less aware of what they are doing.

As the information we receive from our joints is crucial for controlling muscles, we begin to lose control of them and they may either become weak and unresponsive or they may become overactive when they should be relaxed.

Overtime, this affects other joints, which compensate for the loss of function at other levels and so the problem escalates until eventually we do something quite ordinary but because the joints and muscles aren't able to react properly the forces involved overcome them and an injury occurs.

For example I have had a power-lifter in the clinic, who can lift 200kgs yet his back was injured picking up a pen from the floor. This is purely because the nervous system was not controlling that movement correctly, and his back literally buckled due to force of bending forwards incorrectly.

## **This Is Why Your Back “Goes Out!”**

### **Where does it go?**

Your joints don't go anywhere, they certainly don't “pop out”. However because the muscles tighten, they feel like they've “popped out”. In reality they have merely seized up within their normal range of motion. This doesn't mean it doesn't hurt. The spine is richly innervated with joint position sensors and pain sensors, it is also subject to quite incredible forces. So when the joint is hurt, it really hurts.

### **So what gets injured?**

The simple answer to that is just about everything. The spinal joints get stressed and irritated because of the above. The disc can eventually get tears in it that over time weaken it, leading to what we call a prolapse or “slipped disc”, the ligaments get ruptured and muscles get torn. If untreated this eventually leads to the wear and tear of arthritis.

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## Excellent Treatment Should Address All These Issues and More

In order to recover from an injury and prevent it recurring there are several steps that are vital in any treatment program. The most important of these is education, if you don't understand what is causing your pain or why we have problems you will never be able to truly overcome your problem for the long term. This can lead to an over reliance on medication or other treatments. If you know why these things occur you are more likely to stay in control of your problem.

As discussed, when we hurt our backs the joints that have been overworking suddenly move without the control of the small deep muscles, this causes a localised spasm and may injure the joint surface, it can also cause a tear in the ligaments or the thick capsule of the joint, furthermore if the movement is severe it could also tear muscles and even the fibres of the inter-vertebral disc.

These events happen repeatedly during our lives, each time if the problem is not corrected the joint becomes looser, the disc more pliable, the muscles struggle more and more to control the excessive movement, scar tissue and areas of sensitivity build up, and the joint becomes more likely to be injured in the future.

### “The Slipped Disc”

In some cases the tears in the disc can join up to such an extent that the disc weakens to the point where it prolapses. This is the slipped disc. It doesn't actually slip anywhere but the soft material inside it can ooze or even be squirted out, crushing the

nerve and resulting in extreme pain, loss of the muscle associated with that disc and loss of sensation as well. So in effect we become disabled.

## How Does The Body React?

Finally over time the body has to lay down extra bone around the joints to stabilise that segment, we become stiffer with age but suffer less from sharp pains. Unfortunately you also start to reduce the space for the nerves which in some cases can permanently trap the nerves and you could end up with sciatica, cramps and weakness in the legs or arms, this usually occurs after the age of 60. This can be quite disabling and prevent you from walking very far without having to rest due to cramp-like pain in the calves.

It is therefore very important that you look after and treat your body with respect, not just looking for the quick fix, which is no better than painting over rust on a car, (looks good for a while but then comes back and needs even more treating) but looking at resolving these problems for the long term.

## How Can I Help To Ease The Pain Myself?

What you really need to get things right, is a targeted approach that addresses all the events that take place when you hurt yourself.

You need to start by dealing with the inflammation, this is probably the most important thing you can do to help yourself and also the most overlooked, in fact many people recommend heat for the pain.

Heat will make it feel comfortable but it will not reduce your inflammation, the muscles

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will feel relaxed as the blood flows round them. Unfortunately the blood will also flow to the inflamed joint, so when you take the heat off, the muscles will tighten again.

If you iced the opposite would happen, the muscles would not like it much, but when you took the pack off, the joint would be less inflamed, and muscles will relax as they will not be reacting to the pain as much. For information on how and when and where to ice see guide at back.

## Will Stretching My Back Help It?

The other thing that you can do to help yourself is to keep the spine straight, another common mistake is to bend this way and that to get the back flexible. It is precisely that increased flexibility at the weak spot that probably caused the problem in the first place, so putting more force through it may cause more pain and could prolong the problem significantly.

In fact your muscles automatically tense to stiffen and protect your back. This is important as it reduces further injury. Stretching the spine will reduce this protection, weaken the muscles and could prolong the problem.

The best thing to do is go for a walk, this gently exercises the muscles without putting too much strain on them. This is provided it is not causing you too much pain.

It is very important that you get up and down from a chair in the correct manner, please see page 7 for details.

Painkillers can be taken, check that the medication is suitable for any pre-existing conditions you may have, for example do not take Ibuprofen or similar anti-inflammatories if you are asthmatic unless your GP has advised you it is safe. Also be aware if you have a heart condition or are already taking aspirin. Anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) are useful in helping to reduce inflammation and therefore pain, paracetamol is useful alone or in conjunction with NSAIDs.

## The Importance Of Targeted And Therapeutic Exercise Rehabilitation

Exercises are extremely important for recovery once you have passed through the initial inflammatory phase.

However the type of exercise you do is of paramount importance. Some will make you better some will make you worse, it is entirely different for each individual and it is therefore important that you take advice from someone who has intimate knowledge of biomechanics (how the body moves and works).

For example sit ups place a huge strain on the low back and should not really be done, if you had an early disc problem, they could actually prolapse the disc, there are alternatives that place minimal stress on the spine.

The initial phase of any quality spinal exercise program should teach you how to move your limbs while maintaining a neutral spine, then the range of that limb movement should be increased until it is normal or as close to as possible.

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Then the movement can be trained to gain stamina and finally strengthened. At this point stability and agility training combine to give you a rock solid, highly stable trunk that can detect stress and adjust to it accurately and quickly for prolonged periods of time.

Your needs will be different to others, but with regular exercises on top of treatment you can consolidate your recovery to the point where you are actually better than you were before it happened and if you keep working at it, possibly the best you've been for years. For details of our treatment plans please call the clinic.

## The Importance Of Correcting Poor Spinal Function

If you don't have treatment, or don't rehabilitate the spine adequately or appropriately, it is virtually certain that your problem will recur at some point.

In fact as most of us don't drastically change our lifestyles it is likely to come back just as bad if not worse. But that is not all, each time it happens the body becomes more worn out, to the point where the pain may become chronic.

This is a real shame as most people don't need to suffer from recurrent pain and can avoid it if they follow these steps.

The frustrating thing is that you can't manipulate yourself correctly, you need to have professional and experienced help.

If you do attempt to loosen your own joints, you are likely to be loosening the already loose joints and effectively making yourself weaker, these will then feel stiff as your body tries to stabilise them.

Repeatedly doing this makes them tighten more often and if you continue to loosen them leads to excessive movement and wear and tear as the body reacts in the only way it knows to stabilise the joints by laying down bone. We offer precise treatment to restore the joints that need to be loosened.

## These Problems Occur In Your Other Joints Too

Weakness in certain muscles and tension in others leads to imbalances in the way that other joints move too. The end result of this is poor movement of a joint with excessive shear at one part and restriction of another. The end result is the joint doesn't glide but starts to hinge and gap, this leads to loosening of ligaments and further loss of stability. Symptoms of this can be a joint that feels it is about to give way. The result is pain and weakness as you avoid using the joint and we are then in a vicious circle as the lack of use causes further weakness and also fear of injury.





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## How Do We Treat This?

The same principles apply, strengthen the weak muscles, stretch the tight ones, then train function through the whole chain. For example if you have knee pain, the commonest cause is weakness of the hip and inside quadriceps(thigh) muscle, possibly also affected by flat feet causing a rolling in of the lower leg.

In addition the fibrous band that runs down the outside of the thigh can get tight, this restricts the outside of the knee and focuses strain on the inside. (Feel the inside border of your knee joints now, are they tender? If they are you could have this problem to a minor degree).

## How do we treat it?

Ice the inside of the knee for 10 mins 3x a day while it remains tender, strengthen the Gluteal muscles on the outside of the hip, stretch the tight band on the side of the thigh and possibly prescribe orthotics to reduce the flat footedness.

Then strengthen the inside quadriceps and finally functionally train the whole leg through squats and one legged squats. NB. (Do not try squats at home unless you have been fully advised on how to do them correctly.)

## Exercises That Should Be Avoided or Limited

- Rolling head or hips in a full circle.
- Repeated rotation, side bending, flexing or extension of spine or neck.
- Repeated Abdominal crunches especially with a twist. (There are better alternatives, sign up for email course for details).
- Excessive or poorly controlled neck or low back stretches.
- Do not perform any exercise if it gives you any sharp pain.
- Do not perform an exercise that you struggle to do correctly on the first few repetitions, it is beyond your ability and should be done only when you have mastered the step before it.

For details of our course of rehabilitation contact the clinic.



## How to bend and sit down to significantly reduce the strain on the low back and neck.

Sounds daft doesn't it. After all we have been sitting and standing all our lives, however when done incorrectly you can start to put a repetitive stress on joints that leads to very painful and relentless neck or low back pain.

We all know we should keep a straight back, but how do we do this when sitting and how do we keep control? When you sit you should try to maintain a straight low back, to achieve this you must bend from the hips and put your bottom out, so effectively you are leaning over your hips and knees. At the same time keep your chin tucked in a little so your neck does not extend (flex backwards) as you sit down or stand up, to keep an eye on things, look up using your eyes and not your neck. The photo's show a typical poor postural control and the correct control. Without thinking sit up and down and see what you do.

Now if you gently push your knees apart while doing this you will be able to focus the effort in the buttocks as you sit or stand. The aim of this is to prevent you using excessive force and movement in the back, and train you to use your buttocks to lift you up instead.

Amazingly many people suffer from what is technically known as Gluteal amnesia. They literally forget where their buttocks are. This of course could be the chance to put in a few jokes but I'll refrain for now. The result is you literally throw your hips forward using your back muscles and Hamstrings. Using your buttocks will reduce the effort and strain significantly.

Repeat this against the arm of a sofa, or using a gym ball roll it down your back as you do squats against the wall.



**Correct (straight Back, chin tucked)**



**Incorrect (flexed lower back and chin poking out)**



## Top Ten Tips For A Healthy Spine

1. Avoid flexing from the waist, kneel to put on shoes or socks, don't touch toes, especially first thing in the morning, don't do side bends especially first thing.
2. Squat when washing face/shaving/brushing teeth again especially first thing.
3. Always try to push or pull from your navel (belly button), do not push across or swivel repeatedly, e.g. when hoovering or mowing the lawn.
4. If you have been flexed for a period of time, e.g. gardening. Stand up straight and even extend your back gently and hold for about 10 minutes before you attempt to lift a load.
5. Always do exercises that you are in control of, if you feel that you are getting tired and are beginning to lose control of your form stop, reduce the activity, allow the muscles to recover then try again.
6. When weight training or lifting, firstly fix your spine in a neutral position by tensing lower back muscles and also the stomach muscles (do not pull in tummy, this will make you weaker). Then pull shoulders back to tense shoulder blades to the rib cage. Do not twist and do not over reach.
- 7: If you have a strain or pain, ice as advised below, do not jump straight into a hot bath.
- 8: Make sure you are fully hydrated by drinking 2 litres, (4 pints) of water a day. This prevents muscles becoming affected by a build up of toxins and waste products.
- 9: Eat a balanced diet, rich in wholefoods, avoid ready meals, junk food, consider taking a high quality omega 3-6-9 supplement and you may find Glucosamine-Sulphate useful, beware of poor quality products. Avoid excessive caffeine in teas, coffee, fizzy drinks. Do not exceed your recommended alcohol intake or smoke.
- 10: Try to keep a lid on stress if you can, keeping in touch with family and friends and enjoying long walks in a natural environment can help significantly.

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## Summary

### This Is What You Need To Do If You Have Pain:

1. Ice the spine: Wrap a flexible ice pack in a cloth. Apply for 10 minutes for neck, 20 minutes for low back, over the spine itself. Do 3-4 x a day, more so at the end of the day.
2. Keep moving around gently: Movement stimulates the nerves which detect and control joints, this is known to help to reduce pain.
3. Try to get up and down from a chair as shown in the exercise.
4. Do not over stretch or twist to try to relieve the pain, it is more likely than not to make it worse.
5. Contact Back In Form for professional help to make sure that you are getting targeted advice for your specific problem. Do be careful following a sheet of exercises if they haven't been specifically prescribed for you.
6. Call us for free no obligation advice, or have a **free 20 minute** consultation to identify your problem and target its resolution.
7. Visit and bookmark our web-site **[www.backinform.co.uk](http://www.backinform.co.uk)** or sign up for our regular email advice on how to stay pain free, helpful products, research and exercises by emailing us and asking to be added to our email news list. Let it be your complete back pain resource and let's keep your body working better for longer.

## Thank-you for your time



**Dr. Steven Oldale** BSc, DC, Chiropractor.

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## Testimonials - Some comments on our treatment

Steve is one of the best chiropractors we have experienced – we have lived in several countries, including the USA so that is quite a statement to make. **Juliana and Arthur Rigby**

I am very pleased with the level of care, all explanations are given in detail but easy to understand. The clinic is clean and welcoming. I have recommended a couple of friends and will carry on doing so. **Tina Robertson**

I have been receiving Chiropractic care for the last 20 years ,during that time I have received treatment from about a half a dozen different practitioners.

Having been treated by Steven for the last 6 months I have found him to be expert in every field, he exceeds any other treatment that I have ever received.

Steven's support and advice on everything from posture and things to avoid has been exhaustive and he always takes the time to ensure you understand why he is advising you to do something and why it is important for you to do it. These are small things but collectively they make a great difference and show just how keen Steven really is to get you, and keep you better.

Steven will only want to see you at the frequencies that are needed. Steven has gone to number one in my book. Make him yours and get your health (and life) back again.

**David Marsh**

The nature of my problem was explained in layman's terms and I was encouraged to ask questions about anything I did not understand. The answers were always in words I could understand and never given in patronising manner.

The results were good – I am no longer in pain – and achieved in a pleasant, and sometimes entertaining way!

I have suffered for years with neck and back problems. My son suggested I visit a chiropractor. It has to be the best thing I have ever done. I have persuaded my husband to have treatment and have noticed a great improvement in his back.

Perfect service – How can you improve on perfection. Excellent Clinic. **Peter Reeves**

Quickly sorted out my back problem, and since then have been mainly pain free. Would recommend this practice to others who suffer from back problems.

I have had back problems for many years and the pain has become part of my life. However, since receiving treatment at "Back in Form" not only am I no longer in pain but I have real confidence that it will be a thing of the past. The treatment can sometimes be uncomfortable but this is a small price to pay for the long term benefits that are being achieved. Thank you! **Louise Wareham**



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The exercises I have found very helpful. I am also pleased with the treatment and would not hesitate to recommend the Clinic to anyone with problems. **Meryl Anderson**

**I would totally recommend Steven. He is professional yet friendly, always understanding and supportive with your ailment. Treatment works too!**

I have found the treatment to be very beneficial. Steve clearly explained what my particular problem was and what action was needed to help rectify the problem. During all my visits both Steve and his team have acted in a friendly, professional manner. Since visiting the clinic my condition has improved dramatically and I would not hesitate to recommend Back in Form to friends and family. **Jack Dunford**

I have had treatment with Steve for seven years. Firstly because my back pain was so bad it was unbearable. Steve soon got me moving again and explained every treatment to me. He gave me exercises to keep me moving and to help with the pain. Now I don't need so much treatment and Steve will tell me how often I need to visit, 3–6 months, so he isn't out to just get my money, though every penny is worth it. Steve is a caring person and a great listener. **GK Stickland**

Quick and immediate results. **Sara Milne**

I've always found a visit to the Clinic a pleasant experience. Always warm and friendly and convenient appointment times. Steven has always made me feel comfortable and at ease. Also showing great consideration for my tolerance levels. The benefits have been many, uncovering and curing problems I didn't know I had even. Particularly the ones I did though! **DS Nother**

**Over 25 years ago I had an accident, which left me with lower back pain. In recent years, with age, the pain got much worse. At one stage I seriously thought I would have to give up work.**

**Following a recommendation, I booked an appointment with Steven. After a 3 month programme of treatment I had a release from pain I had not known for years. Routine visits now ensure that I continue to enjoy a pain free life together with sensible advice and simple exercises from Steve.**

He has also treated my husband for a shoulder pain he had for many years. Again he has enjoyed a full recovery, where many other treatments over time had failed. **Mrs Jenny O'Carroll**