

Small Business Digest

INFORMATION TO IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS'S STRATEGIES, EFFECTIVENESS, AND PROFITS.

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- [OFFERINGS](#)
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JoAnn Laing

5 Ways Entrepreneurs Can Beat Back Pain



Many people, entrepreneurs and small business owners among them, have conditions such as degenerative disc disease and do not realize it until the pain begins.

According to Dr. Rey Bosita, Jr of the Texas Back Institute, "If the spine becomes deconditioned and the muscles become more fatigued, then range of motion can be reduced and the lower back disc is more likely to become symptomatic of an existing condition. This will cause back pain."

For someone who is sitting at his or her desk for 10 to 12 hours a day, there is little time to get to the gym and exercise, stretch and condition those muscles. Sedentary workers are also susceptible to cardiovascular disease due to a lack of exercise.

Yes, entrepreneurs are known for "putting their nose to the grindstone," but should also consider maintaining their health for a long and prosperous career as a leader," according to Dr. Bosita.

He also believes by using entrepreneurial discipline to create a balance between work, family and exercise an individual can help create a successful and pain-free life.

Here are some of Dr. Bosita's tips to get started:

1. **Tackle Early Symptoms of Stress and Pain:**Entrepreneurs and others in stressful occupations have a much higher incidence of back and neck pain. Unfortunately, many entrepreneurs try and ignore this and "push through" rather than stopping to fix the problem. Ignoring back pain can lead to more significant back issues including a decrease in the level of back function.
2. **Put Down Your Device, Pick up Your Work-Out Gear:**It's amazing how much we depend on our mobile devices for business and personal scheduling. So, put that device to work on scheduling regular exercise and back health preservation (and then put it away during your work-out). Use that smart phone to schedule regular periods of time, during the work day and after, for family time, stretching and exercise. Then, just as one would do with a business appointment, follow that schedule!

Bonus Back Tip:

Simple back preservation exercises (video icon image) can be used to build back strength and flexibility, just make sure you check in with your doctor first, and get a green light to proceed.

3. **Incorporate a Standing Desk in the Workspace:**Another good tactic for better back health involves incorporating a standing desk. Standing desks let you to alternate between sitting and standing while working on a computer.
It's not a cure-all by any means. However, it is a good tool for incorporating more movement during the work day.

4. **Breathe Deeply:**Stressed? Overworked? Back hurting? Just. Breathe.In times of stress, an individual tends to take very shallow breaths. Conversely, in times of relaxation, the breaths tend to be longer and deeper. Interestingly, these processes can exacerbate how someone is feeling – short, shallow breaths can encourage more stress and deeper breathing can lead to feelings of relaxation. Deep breathing exercises can help "smooth out" emotional stress.

Entrepreneurs and small business owners face a great deal of anxiety and stress because they have far less support than is available in larger organizations. This is a constant challenge to overcome and, in many ways, it is what drives self-employed or entrepreneurs to succeed. However, too much anxiety can cause physical problems such as back pain. For anxious over-achievers, however, deep, calming breaths are easy to do and take minimal time from that deadline-driven work day!

5. **Use Responsible Pain Management Tactics:**There is no more controversial topic than pain management. The long-term negative effects of prescription drugs such as opiates concern everyone, especially physicians. It is very easy for a patient in pain to take a pill rather than go to physical therapy, lose weight or exercise regularly.

There are times when medication can be an excellent way to reduce the pain of a

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back injury for the short run. However, long term use of medications could indicate there is a more serious problem which needs a different type of treatment option. Sedentary work, being overweight, lack of exercise and constant stress can all contribute to back problems. Solving these challenges requires a change in attitude about work and health.

Rey Bosita, Jr., M.D., M.B.A., is a board-certified orthopedic spine surgeon at Texas Back Institute who specializes in lumbar and cervical disc surgery. Dr. Bosita and is a graduate of Stanford University, The University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine, and Northwestern University J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management.

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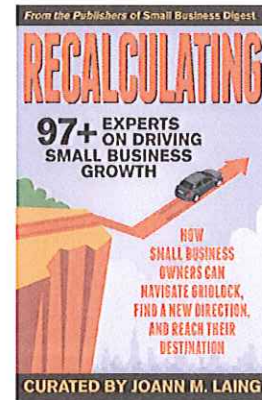
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