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May 2006 is a healthier and happier year.... I am introducing a new format of my newsletter:
Concise, informative and reproducible. Your comments are greatly appreciated.

Please visit my website: www.drayache.com

IN A BAD BACK MOOD

Too many people spend too little time trying to do too much. The result is stress. The cause of back pain for millions of people, stress is difficult to define but impossible to ignore.

Stress in Your Life

You probably think you can identify the things that cause stress in your life: deadlines at work, budget worries, traffic jams, death or illness of a loved one and other negative experiences. What you may have overlooked are the positive experiences that can be as stressful such as: Buying a new house or cars, planning a wedding, graduating from college or starting a new job are all high on the stress scale.

For many people, stress and back pain have become a part of life, but it doesn't have to be that way. You can learn to break the stress connection. Stress preys on the body's most vulnerable part (and if you're like most people, it'll be your back). The human spine is designed for strength and flexibility, with three natural curves to carry your body weight evenly. The S shape of your spine is supported by muscles in your back, legs and abdomen. If you spend most of your time sitting or have poor posture, these crucial muscles are weakened and strain to support your spine. This weakened condition makes it difficult for your muscles to bounce back from stress; instead, they contract and cause pain. You have to learn how to condition your body as well as your mind to beat back stress.

Condition Your Mind

Learn to let go. There are some things in your life that you can't control; accept them and save your energy for the things you can do something about.

Learn to relax. Try yoga, meditation, breathing exercises or day dreaming—it doesn't matter what, but do it every day. Reserve 10 minutes for yourself and make a commitment to your "me" time.

Learn your signs of stress. Do you break out in a sweat? Do your knees knock? Everyone has a different response to stress. Recognizing yours is the first step in getting it under control.

Learn to manage your time. Do important things in order of importance and allow yourself to say no without guilt when you can't do something.

Condition Your Body

A regular program of exercise will give you an outlet for some of your tension and strengthen your stress-susceptible muscles. Aerobic exercises are especially good stress busters because they make you breathe deeply and pump more oxygen-rich blood through your body (aerobic means "with oxygen"). Aerobic exercise also releases endorphins, your body's natural painkillers.

You Can Do It

Even if your life isn't completely stress free, it can be free of stress-related back pain. You can break the connection between pain and stress by taking care of your body and your mind. Like deep breathing exercises, a healthy diet and positive mental attitude.