

BACK CARE BOOT CAMP®



Basic Training Manual

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The ideas, procedures, and suggestions contained
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DISCLAIMER

This workbook is designed to be used during a treatment program for low back pain supervised by a healthcare provider.

The information contained in this workbook is compiled from a variety of sources. It may not be complete or timely. It does not cover all diseases, physical conditions, ailments, or treatments. This workbook does NOT take the place of working with a physical therapist or physician. This workbook should only be used in conjunction with a supervised physical therapy program. The information should NOT be used in place of an individual consultation, examination, or visit with your physician or other qualified healthcare provider. You should never disregard the advice of your physician or other qualified healthcare provider because of any information you read in this workbook. If you have any healthcare questions, please consult your physician or other qualified healthcare provider promptly. Always consult with your physician or other qualified healthcare provider before you begin any new treatment.

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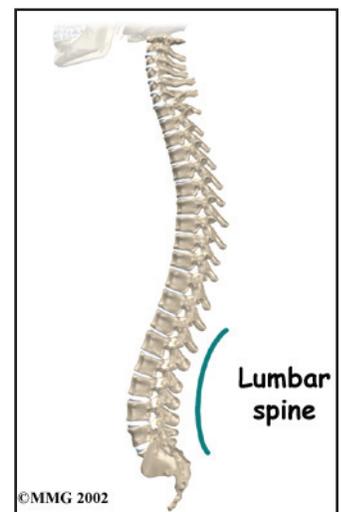
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Introduction: Patients

Join the Ranks

What? *Back Care Boot Camp*? About now, you might be thinking, “Hey, I didn’t join the army!” Perhaps you didn’t. But the fact that you’re reading this introduction probably means you’ve had back pain or a back injury. If so, you have joined the growing army of people who’ve had back problems. Experts say that as many as eight out of 10 people will have back pain that hampers work or play in their lives.

If you feel like a new recruit, don’t worry. You won’t be asked to hit the floor and do 20 pushups. But when you’ve had back pain even once, there’s a 90 percent chance you’ll have it again sooner or later. The key is knowing how to take care of problems when they happen and how to lower your chances of future problems. That’s what *Back Care Boot Camp* is all about.

A successful military effort requires planning, preparing, and responding—along with a healthy dose of discipline. Likewise, people who’ve had back problems do best when they have a plan, when they prepare, and when they respond using ideas and methods that work. *Back Care Boot Camp* provides the information and resources to help you succeed in this mission. We’re counting on you to provide the needed discipline by applying the tips and strategies you’ll learn.

Why *Back Care Boot Camp*?

The number of people afflicted by back pain continues to rise. The economic costs are staggering, but so are the costs in discomfort, pain, and suffering. Granted, most people who have back pain for the first time feel better within six to 12 weeks, regardless of the treatments they do (or don’t) get.

Most people who’ve had back pain don’t get better by themselves. They may begin to have less pain, but that isn’t always a sign that everything has returned to normal. Scientists have determined that having back pain, even once, can alter the way your back and abdominal muscles work, which can leave your spine unsupported and prone to another injury. That’s where *Back Care Boot Camp* comes in. It details these new facts. It also teaches you ways to energize your muscles again to protect your back and to reduce the chances of having a future problem.

Unfortunately, a small percentage of people with back pain don't get better right away, and they end up with long-term (chronic) back pain. About 10 percent of these chronic cases account for more than 80 percent of the costs for low back pain. *Back Care Boot Camp* gives immediate guidance to help you head off potential long-term problems—before they occur.

Back Care Boot Camp is built on the most recent information. The experts who designed the program have sifted through global resources and identified the best methods and information for helping people with back pain. When you've completed the program, the syllabus and accompanying information are yours to keep. So you'll always have a handy resource that is filled with references, tips, and strategies you can use again and again.

What's in It for Me?

The *Back Care Boot Camp* program includes eight sessions that are designed for eight clinic visits. Each session is divided into seven main sections.



Goals: Goals are listed at the beginning of each session. Read each goal carefully to help focus your energy on the most important elements of the session.



Information to Master: Read this section in detail. It will help you understand why your therapist wants you to practice a particular skill or do a specific exercise.



Answers for Review: Use this session to compare your answers from last session's Questions for Review.



Skills to Master: These skills give you the nuts and bolts on how to take care of your back. Each skill includes a rationale, a description, a recommendation, and a list of possible concerns. Practice only the skills shown by your therapist. You'll be asked to demonstrate these skills at the next clinic visit.



Drill Time: This is your opportunity to demonstrate the skills you've been practicing. Your therapist will drill you and make sure you're doing each skill correctly.



Questions for Review: Take a few moments to answer the questions listed in this section. They form a summary of the information and skills within the session.



Review: The key points of the session are listed for a quick review and can be used as a refresher in the future.

Your Mission

Your mission is to learn all you can about taking care of your back. *Back Care Boot Camp* is just one resource to help you succeed in this mission. It is best used as part of a comprehensive therapy program. Always follow the advice of your doctor and therapist. When you've completed the program, you'll be a seasoned veteran who knows how to successfully take care of your spine.

Introduction: Physical Therapists

A New Era in Back Care

Times have changed. So have the approaches used to successfully treat and manage low back pain. The challenge we face as physical therapists is to consistently provide our patients with the best treatments and information available. The task of consolidating and delivering the newest and latest research on spine care is daunting. That's where *Back Care Boot Camp* can help.

Patient education is paramount to successful outcomes when treating patients with low back pain. The key is to provide current and evidence-based information. *Back Care Boot Camp* is a compilation of global guidelines and research, so you can be sure that your patients get up-to-date information—every time.

In this new era, we often face a time crunch that limits one-on-one time with our patients. And it's our back patients that often need more of our time. We're also faced with fewer and fewer visits due to a managed-care environment. The *Back Care Boot Camp* program consolidates the information and skills we want our patients to assimilate. Implementing *Back Care Boot Camp* can help you maximize your efficiency, while ensuring that your patients get what they need.

Who Benefits?

Patients

Today's patients are hungry consumers searching for the latest and best resources and information. *Back Care Boot Camp* provides them with a unified core of knowledge.

Patients learn by doing. The course syllabus is interactive, so patients can begin to put the new information to work right away. The syllabus follows a session-by-session format, which keeps patients on track over the course of care. Your patients have continuous access to the information. And the syllabus is theirs to keep, so they'll always have a valuable resource to which they can refer.

Patients take an active part in their rehabilitation. The program minimizes passive interventions. Patients are directed to take an active role in the

management of their spine condition. The final sessions promote active strategies for life-long spine care.

Today's literature promotes a sports-medicine model for patients with low back pain. Obviously, this enthusiastic approach must be applied only where appropriate. It should be adjusted for the aging adult, for example, who may need to proceed more slowly. In general, patients do best when encouraged early on to resume normal activity as soon as possible. The beginning sessions of *Back Care Boot Camp* help you direct your patients toward this goal.

Physical Therapists

Back Care Boot Camp is not a fixed protocol. It is a valuable tool that you can use to enhance your health-care delivery. The program is not meant as a substitute to a complete rehabilitation program. Nor is it to be used in lieu of a formal physical therapy evaluation.

Use the program to save time in the clinic. You can spend more of your valuable time evaluating and treating your patients. Because *Back Care Boot Camp* provides much of the information you need to relay, you won't find yourself bogged down with all the details of patient education. The syllabus supplements the information you intend to deliver.

The *Back Care Boot Camp* syllabus ensures consistent delivery of the information and skills patients need to take control of their back condition. You won't have to worry about getting interrupted and inadvertently leaving out vital information during clinic visits. You can add as much additional detail as you like during the course of care.

Back Care Boot Camp was designed using clinical guidelines. The guidelines chosen include the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality in the United States (formerly the United States Agency for Health Care Policy and Research), the Cochrane Collection Back Group in the United Kingdom, and the New Zealand Guidelines Group.

The program is outcomes-based. Track patient outcomes from start to finish using the forms included in the *Back Care Boot Camp* program. You can document these changes in the *Progress Flow Chart* form, and add the form to the patient's chart. Use these records to promote your results and your approach



to helping patients with back pain. To avoid bias, you may wish to remove the scoring forms prior to issuing patients the syllabus. These forms are located in Appendix A under “Providers.”

Referring Providers

Your referring providers also benefit. When they become familiar with *Back Care Boot Camp*, they can prescribe the program with confidence—knowing what their patients will be doing and learning every step of the way. And you’ll be able to communicate with your referring providers using the resources available in the program, including the outcomes measures, forms, and handouts.

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Introduction: Referring Providers

Why *Back Care Boot Camp*?

Taking care of patients with low back pain is challenging.

Most of us who have spent any significant time caring for patients afflicted with low back pain realize quickly how little patients understand about their back and the problems that face them.

We all think we are great communicators, but reality tells us otherwise. Too often, we are guilty of spouting off some theory about what we think is causing the patient's pain, why we are ordering the MRI scan, why we are prescribing three or four medications, and what the patients should do to help themselves.

The problem is that we don't give patients what they really need, which is a clear understanding of how their back works and good instruction about what they can do to help themselves. Instead, we give them incomplete explanations and a pamphlet of exercises that they often don't understand. We expect them to be compliant, but we sometimes fail to give them the tools to be compliant.

We're often too busy to do the right thing.

As my frustrations grew, so did my intention to solve this problem. How could I be sure that my patients were getting off to a good start in caring for their back pain? How could I ensure that they were learning the information and skills they needed to reduce their risk of future back problems? How could I ensure that someone was taking the time to explain the anatomy and body mechanics in a way that my patients would understand? And how could I help my patients know why they were doing their exercises?

Back Care Boot Camp is the result of that frustration. I worked with three physical therapists, Brent Dodge, Mary Frank, and Jennifer Brooke, to create a core curriculum of information and skills. We felt that every back patient should have the opportunity to learn and master a specific curriculum. The result is a body of information that ensures that all patients receive the necessary tools to care for their back pain.

Back Care Boot Camp is the resource that most patients need.

The program is not intended to limit what the physical therapist does with the patient. We realize that each patient is unique, and a one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate. The physical therapist is the expert in assessing the needs of the patient and providing a plan of treatment to fit those needs. But all back care patients need to understand a core of information and master a common set of tools to care for their back pain. *Back Care Boot Camp* is designed to present the core of knowledge that all back patients need to know and use.

Back Care Boot Camp accomplishes this goal through a syllabus that delivers clear, concise information to the patient. The program is not ambiguous. There are clear expectations for both the patient and the physical therapist.

Why should you use *Back Care Boot Camp*?

Back Care Boot Camp simplifies your life and improves care for your back patients.

Back Care Boot Camp provides you with the comfort of knowing that your patients will be getting a comprehensive, consistent, evidence-based approach to their back problems. When you refer your patients to a physical therapist using the *Back Care Boot Camp* approach, you know what your patients will be doing and learning.

Back Care Boot Camp improves communication among providers and ensures appropriate and timely referral and intervention.

Back pain is a complex disorder. Current research on the natural history of back pain clearly shows that the condition cannot be understood or effectively addressed by a simplistic disease model. The condition represents a multifactorial, biopsychosocial condition.

Assessment tools are built into *Back Care Boot Camp*. They are designed to provide practitioners with ample feedback for identifying associated comorbidities. They also facilitate decisions about early intervention and timely



referral to specialists. You receive this information quickly, helping you communicate effectively with insurers and other third-party payers.

***Back Care Boot Camp* helps you translate complex information in a way your patients can understand.**

Most patients who present with back pain have little knowledge of how their back works or the cause of their pain. For many, this is the first serious medical condition they have faced. We as practitioners shouldn't expect these patients to develop a satisfactory understanding of these issues in one or two visits. This is new territory for these patients! We must not simply throw information at them; it needs to be presented in a fashion that is digestible and *understandable*.

Back Care Boot Camp provides patients with information in a logical, incremental fashion. When patients understand the rationale behind a particular recommendation, they are much more likely to make the behavioral change and continue the exercise or activity. *Back Care Boot Camp* is a system designed to engage patients' cognitive abilities and senses in order to help them sustain the behavioral changes that are necessary to improve the natural history of back pain.

Each lesson in *Back Care Boot Camp* builds on previous successes in mastering earlier material. Each lesson combines immediate physical *doing* in addition to cognitive *learning* so that each skill begins to be reinforced immediately. The multimedia tools provided in this program address all learning styles. The information is delivered in multiple modes including text, visual, auditory, and active participation.

Try the program for yourself. See if your patients benefit as much as mine have. See if it makes your life easier. I am optimistic that you'll be delighted with the results.

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