A man in a white polo shirt is performing a massage on a person's back. He is leaning over the person, with his hands clasped together on their back. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a couch and cushions.

# TAKE CARE OF YOUR NECK AND BACK PAIN

WITH  
BLUE TREE MASSAGE

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## ABOUT

**The number of people suffering from any form of back pain in our western society is high and is constantly increasing.**

We are spending more and more time sitting in front of our computers and smartphones instead of giving our body the movement and exercise it needs to function well.

**The key to a pain free back and neck lies in strengthening and stretching the neck and back muscles on a daily basis.**

So we suggest some easy but efficient stretching exercises to help you to prevent more pain.

Also, **self massage with your hands or a tennis ball could reduce muscle pain.**

To treat the problem during the pain is good, but prevention is better.

**So a good posture, when sitting at your desk or during the night in your bed, is essential.**

You will find some tips on how to improve your posture for a healthy back.

To drink an appropriate juice or use some essential oils could help you to reduce the pain and prevent more tension.

Finally, discover how massage by a professional can help you rid yourself of neck and back problems.

**So now it's time for you to take action!**

*Roel VAN KUIJCK*





# BACK STRETCHING EXERCISES

Learn 6 very easy but efficient stretching techniques to relieve your back pain.  
Repeat 10 times.

## STRETCHING BACKWARD

Get down on your knees on a mat, then either place your hands flat on a higher level, (such as a chair or table), or hold onto it.



Stretch your bottom towards the ground and keep your back straight and your neck in the alignment with the spine (do not lift up or lower your head).

**Always keep your back straight!**

Lengthen your spine when inhaling, then move towards the floor while exhaling.

## STRETCHING ON ALL FOURS 1/2

Get onto all fours on the mat. Squeeze your abdomen.

**While inhaling, dip your back and pull your torso and head upwards.**



## STRETCHING ON ALL FOURS 2/2

**While exhaling, drop your head down towards your chest, tuck in the tail bone and arch your back.**



# BACK STRETCHING EXERCISES

## STRETCHING ON THE SIDE

Stand up straight while holding a walking stick or pole in both hands above your head.

**Holding the stick overhead, gently pull with your right hand, downwards to your right side, while keeping your hands up over your head (like making an arch).**

You should feel a stretch along the left side of the back.

Inhale while trying to make yourself taller, and exhale while pulling down to the right.



## STRETCHING UPWARDS

Lie down on your stomach. Lift up your torso while supporting the weight on your hands with your arms straight.

The legs stay flat on the floor. The abdominal muscles are tight and the back must stay straight.

**Extend the torso and head upwards in order to stretch the back.**

Inhale while making yourself taller and exhale while intensifying the stretch.



## STRETCHING AND ROTATION

Stand up straight and hold the stick in both hands, resting the stick on the shoulders behind the neck.

**Turn your upper body to the right with the stick. The head needs to follow the movement and must follow the direction of the stick.**

Inhale while making yourself taller and exhale while increasing the torsion.

Do the same exercise on the other side.





# NECK STRETCHING EXERCISES

Learn 4 very easy but efficient stretching techniques to relieve neck tension.  
Sit up straight or stand.  
Hold each position 30 seconds.  
Repeat 10 times.



## SIDE STRETCHING

Tilt your head toward your right shoulder and hold for 30 seconds. Repeat to the other side.

## FRONT STRETCHING

Tilt your head so that your chin touches your chest for 30 seconds.



## BACK STRETCHING

Tilt your head back as far as you can and hold for 30 seconds.



## HOW TO ELIMINATE TEXT NECK

We all enjoy the conveniences electronic technology offers, especially our smart phones and tablets!

However, with all the advantages we gain from mobile technology comes the risk of severe back pain in the neck, shoulders and spine.

It results in repeated stress of frequent forward head flexion while looking down at the screens for long periods of time.

All of that pressure can lead to pain and pulled muscles.

Studies prove the effectiveness of massage therapy on clients suffering from chronic neck pain.

These massages range from Swedish to Deep tissue massage techniques. 80% of the participants had decreased neck pain and symptoms and significant improvement in function.

### TIPS

- Hold your cell phone at eye level and stand straight as much as possible.
- Take frequent breaks every 20 to 30 minutes away from your phone and laptop throughout the day.
- Pick up the phone and call people instead of texting.



### TRAPEZIUS STRETCHING

Stretch your arms to the side and push back your shoulder blades while stretching your back.

Repeat several times for 20 seconds



## GET THE GLOW JUICE

This truly is a healing juice.

**Banish those creaky joints, stiff muscles, cramps and circulation problems with this juice.**

The anti-cancer, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and strengthening benefits of turmeric are what makes this juice glow with health.

Additionally, carrots' ability to strengthen the stomach, liver and lungs, and sweet potatoes' capacity to regulate blood sugar levels, means that this juice will breathe new life into any sore or tired body.



For 2,

1/2 sweet potatoe, peeled

2 carrots, thoroughly scrubbed but not peeled

1 yellow or red (bell) pepper

1 lime, peeled

1 cm piece of fresh turmeric (or 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric)

Pass all the ingredients through a juicer and serve.



**Wintergreen essential oil** is an incredible essential oil to use in the relief of muscular aches, pains, and tension.

**Wintergreen essential oil can be used** in gels, creams, lotions, or oils to relieve muscular aches and pains, reduce pain associated with rheumatoid arthritis, **reduce or ease muscular tension**, reduce pain associated with fibromyalgia or chronic lower back pain, and relieve joint stiffness and/or pain.

It does, however, have some contraindications one needs to be mindful about when considering this essential oil in a formulation.

Should not be used with individuals on anticoagulant medication or who are just about to have a major surgery.

Should be used on adults and externally only.

Should NOT be used during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.



## ESSENTIAL OIL

### How to use essential oil for back pain

Apply topically

Essential oil **can be used during a massage or rolled directly onto your back**, but you must dilute it first.

Mix up to 6 drops of your selected oil with 6 teaspoons of a carrier oil, such as jojoba or olive oil. Do a patch test of your diluted oil on a small area of skin. After 24 hours, if no irritation develops, it's likely you can safely use the oil on a larger area of skin, such as your back.

Apply your diluted mixture to the back liberally, massaging in lightly for more absorption.

Be sure to wash your hands before touching your face, as you don't want to irritate your eyes. Also, make sure the oil does not enter your mouth.

# TENNIS BALL MASSAGE

The tennis ball massage technique goes into the deepest muscles and connective tissues.

It relieves soreness, pain and increase blood and oxygen circulation.

All you need are 2 tennis balls!

## NECK MASSAGE

Lie down and place two balls side by side in a sock and settle them under the base of your skull.

Breathe while you rest for 1 min.

Gently nod your head as the balls nuzzle into the back of your neck.

Then **pivot your head from side to side, as if saying “no.”** Alternate back and forth for 3-4 mins.



## UPPER BACK MASSAGE

Lie down and place two balls together, in a sock side by side, on either side of your upper back.

Interlace your hands behind your head and lift your head off the floor, bringing your chin toward your chest.

Lift your bottom off the floor while bending your knees.

**Roll the balls up and down your upper back for 3-4 mins.**



## LOWER BACK MASSAGE

Place 2 balls together in a sock at your lower back and lie on it.

**Breathe deeply while moving your pelvis back and forth so that the balls roll all over your lower back.**

Continue for 5 mins.





## HOW TO USE A TENNIS BALL OR A FOAM ROLLER

Place the foam roller or tennis ball directly on the muscle or body area you want to be treated.

**By applying a medium to strong pressure with your body weight, the tissues, tendons and muscle will be massaged.**

For the neck, back, shoulders, quads, glutes, and hamstrings, it's best to lie on the floor while your body will be used as natural weight.

**With your body, slowly start rolling over the roller or ball for several minutes.**

Rolling over problem areas can help release that built up tension and re-establish the integrity and optimal performance of muscle tissue.

Increase pressure slowly and never force yourself on injured or infected tendons and muscles.

**The foam roller and tennis ball technique are very efficient when used together.**

The foam roller is effective for larger areas and gives a more global release of tension and warming up of muscle groups, while the tennis ball will be used for more precise pressure on specific knots and tight spots, as it goes deeper into the layers of the muscle and connective tissue.

**You can replace the foam roller with several tennis balls assembled in a sock.**

Now it's your turn!



### SHOULDER MASSAGE

Stand straight and hold one ball on your shoulder blade.

**Roll the ball slowly in all directions, starting from the base of your skull into the neck and towards the top of your arm.**

Bend your head down in the opposite direction.

Continue for 3-4 mins and repeat on the other side.



# MASSAGE YOURSELF

An easy way to reduce tension is by giving yourself an auto massage. An auto massage of 10 minutes each day will get rid of a big part of your tension and stress. These movements are simple and easy to execute and will procure immediate relief.



## TRAPEZE MASSAGE

With your right hand massage the opposite shoulder using the palm of your hand.

**Gently squeeze from the top of the arm all the way to the base of the neck.**

Slightly tilt your head.

Repeat on the other side.

## BACK NECK MASSAGE

Place both hands behind your neck and with your fingers **slowly but firmly pull the neck muscle away from the spine.**

Start at the base of the head and work your way towards the lower neck.

Repeat several times.



## OCCIPITAL MASSAGE

Place your hands on the back of your head.

Your thumbs are placed at the line between the head and the neck.

**Press softly and rotate the thumbs following the base of the skull from the center towards the ears.**







## HAND ACUPRESSURE POINT MASSAGE

**The acupressure hand points can reduce back pain, but only when you are lying down.**

This point is located 2 finger widths from the joint of the thumb and index finger.

With your other hand **squeeze the point between the thumb and index finger as shown in the picture.**

Apply firm pressure on this point for a few seconds and then release.

Repeat this 4 to 5 times.

Then switch to the other hand.

# MASSAGE YOURSELF

## How to Ease Pain with Self-Massage

**If you're feeling tense or sore, a self-massage can help you to reduce the pain.**

During a self-massage, you use your hands to manipulate your own muscles. This involves kneading the skin and applying pressure in certain spots.

Self-massage is a simple, convenient way to enjoy the benefits of massage therapy. As a DIY method, it can be done in the comfort of your own home.

Like massage in general, self-massage may help ease pain, muscle tension, muscle strain, stress or anxiety.

It shouldn't replace regular medical treatment, though.

Additionally, if you receive professional massages, self-massage may prolong the benefits and provide relief in between sessions.

**Self-massage may ease minor types of pain, including pain in the neck, shoulders, upper and lower back.**

Self-massage is appropriate if you have mild pain.

But if the pain is intense or ongoing, it's best to see your doctor before trying self-massage techniques.

**You can use it as a preventive self-care method.**

For best results, be gentle with your body and pay attention to your pain.

# GOOD SITTING POSTURE



Good posture is important whether sitting or standing.

**Good posture means that the key parts of a person's body are correctly aligned and supported by the right amount of muscle tension.**

Correct posture can help by:

- reducing strain on the body during movement and exercise
- reducing wear and tear on the joints, muscles, and ligaments
- maintaining balance while moving and exercising
- reducing the risk of muscle strain and overuse conditions
- improving spine health



# GOOD SITTING POSTURE

## The perfect posture:

- **Your eyes should be level with the top of your computer monitor.** This is easier with desktop PCs, but a struggle with laptops where the keyboard and screen are fixed close together.

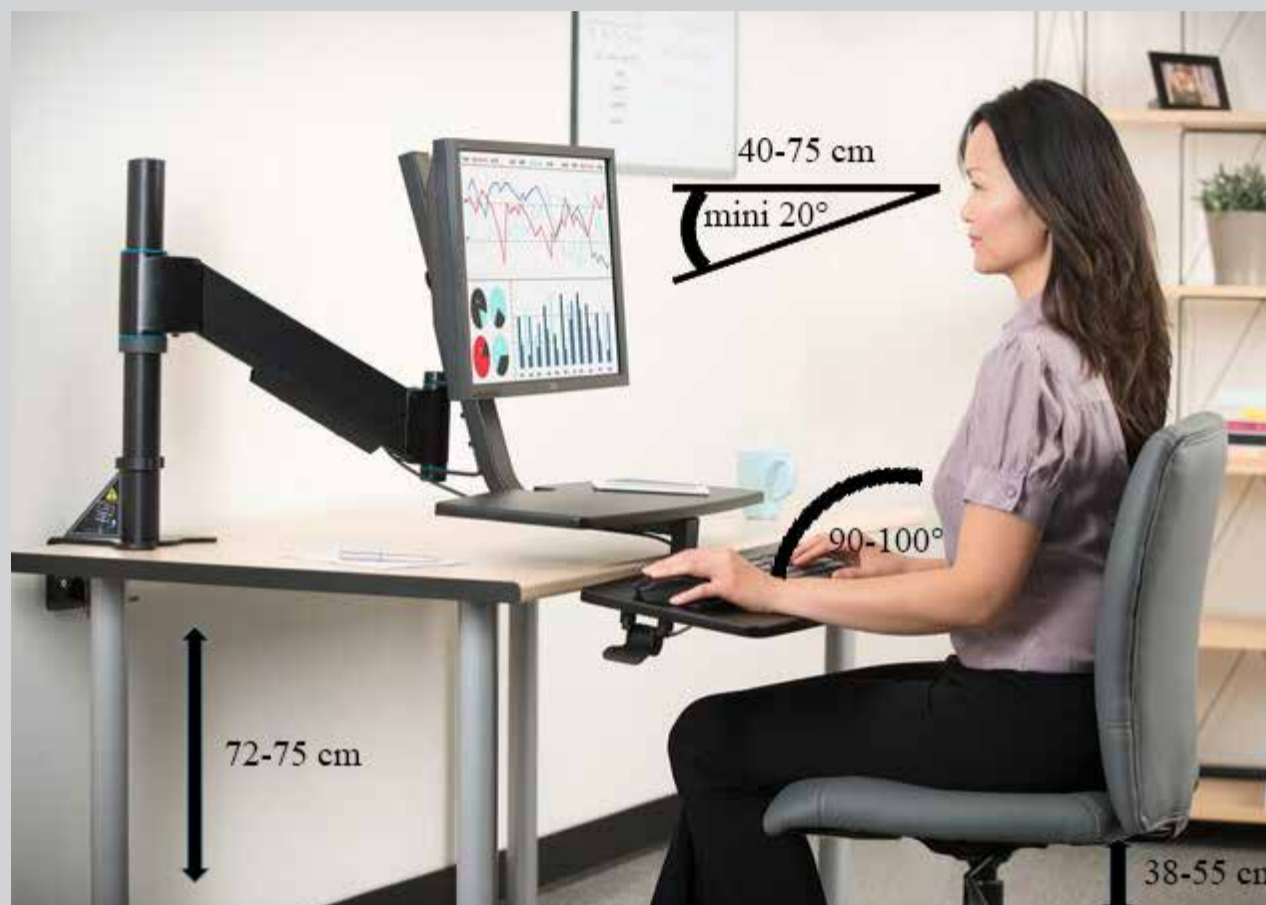
- Your shoulders should be relaxed and low, not high and hunched up. You should feel like you're not lifting your shoulders.

- Your lower arms should be parallel to the floor. They should rest on a support, rather than being held up.

- You shouldn't be reaching too far for your keyboard and mouse. You should be able to control them easily with arms bent at the elbow.

- **Your feet should be flat on the floor.** Just putting your toes on the floor isn't enough!

- **Your upper back should be straight. Your lower back has a natural curve that should be supported by your chair.**



- You shouldn't slouch in your chair. Your hips should be as close to the back of the chair as possible.

- **Your upper legs should be at a 90° angle from your body.** If you're short, this may mean that you need a footrest. If you're particularly tall, you'll need a higher chair (and may also require a higher desk).

- You should be sitting up straight and your screen should be a full arm's length away from you.

- You shouldn't be leaning to one side. It can be tempting to rest on one arm, but this causes your spine to curve.

# GOOD SLEEPING POSTURE



Most everyone knows that good posture is important.

But **good posture doesn't apply just to sitting and standing.**

The muscles and ligaments of your back relax and heal themselves while you sleep.

In order to protect your back, **good posture is important while sleeping**

Here are some tips to help you sleep better:

- **Choose a good mattress.** You should choose a mattress that provides support for the natural curves of your spine and is comfortable.
- **Choose the right pillow.** A pillow that will keep the neck aligned with the chest and lower back.
- **Alignment.** Regardless of your sleeping position, try to keep your ears, shoulders, and hips aligned.



# GOOD SLEEPING POSTURE

## The 2 best positions to sleep:

### A- Sleep on your back with a pillow under your knees

For some people, sleeping on their back may be the best position to relieve back pain:

- Lay flat on your back.

- **Place a pillow underneath your knees and keep your spine neutral. The pillow is important, it works to keep that curve in your lower back.**

- You may also place a small, rolled up towel under the small of your back for added support.

How does this position help?

**When you sleep on your back, your weight is evenly distributed and spread across the widest area of your body.**

As a result, you place less strain on your pressure points.

You're also able to get better alignment of your spine and your internal organs.



### B- Sleep on your side with a pillow between your knees

If lying flat on your back feels uncomfortable, try shifting over to your side:

- Allow your right or left shoulder to make contact with the mattress, along with the rest of that side of your body.

- **Place a pillow between your knees.**

- If there's a gap between your waist and the mattress, consider using a small pillow there for added support.

Whether you use one pillow or opt for two, you should resist the urge to always sleep on the same side.

Doing so many cause issues like muscle imbalance and even scoliosis.

How does this position help?

**Sleeping on your side alone won't make you feel better. It's using the pillow between your knees that's the trick.**

The pillow will keep your hips, pelvis, and spine in better alignment.

## CAN MASSAGE BY A PROFESSIONAL HELP YOUR BACK PROBLEM?

For most of us, the answer is probably 'yes', since massage is non-invasive and considered very low risk for most people.

Massage therapy is more and more accepted as a credible treatment for many types of back pain and as an alternative to other medical treatments.

**Research shows that massage therapy has several potential health benefits for back pain sufferers**, including:

**-Increased blood flow and circulation**, which brings needed nutrition to muscles and tissues. This aids in recovery of muscle soreness from physical activity or soft tissue injury (such as muscle strain).

**-Decreased tension in the muscles.** This muscle relaxation can improve flexibility, reduce pain caused by tight muscles and even improve sleep.

**-Increased endorphin levels**--the "feel good" chemicals in the brain. This mood enhancer can ease depression and anxiety, which can help reduce pain and speed recovery--particularly important for those suffering from chronic back or neck problems.







**Most episodes of back pain are caused by muscle strain and stress, such as from lifting a heavy object, a sudden movement or a fall, work and life related stress.**

The low back pain can be very severe and last for several hours, several days or even a few weeks.

When back muscles are strained or torn, the area around the muscles can become inflamed.

With inflammation, the muscles in the back can spasm and cause both back pain and difficulty moving.

**With massage therapy, the therapist applies alternating levels of concentrated pressure on the treated areas.**

The client will feel some pain or discomfort from the pressure, but the muscle spasm should fade after the massage.

Any soreness from the pressure should disappear in 1 to 3 days, and the muscles that were worked should be less tight for a week or two afterwards.

**A typical massage program for muscle pain consists of 4 to 6 weekly sessions.**

# LOOK AT YOUR MUSCLES



Erector spinalis muscles

Spinalis



**NOW YOU CAN  
SEE WHERE**

**IT HURTS  
DURING**

**A DEEP TISSUE  
MASSAGE!**

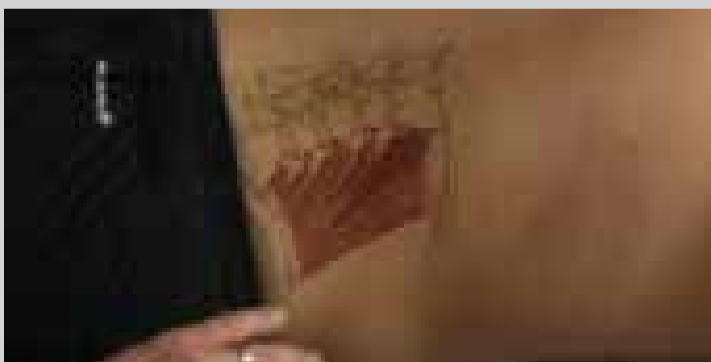


Latissimus dorsal

Rhomboid



Lumbar muscles





# LOOK AT YOUR MUSCLES

Upper trapezius



**NOW YOU CAN  
SEE WHERE**

**IT HURTS  
DURING**

**A DEEP TISSUE  
MASSAGE!**

Middle trapezius



Supraspinatus



Infraspinatus



Sternocleidomastoid



## CONCLUSION

**The back and the neck are one of the most vulnerable parts of the body.**

You rely on them so heavily — whether it is in dealing with your emotional stresses or physically lifting something that you need to carry with you.

**Your back and neck are constantly at risk.** (when you drive, when you are safely at home on your couch or at the office, when you do sports , ...)

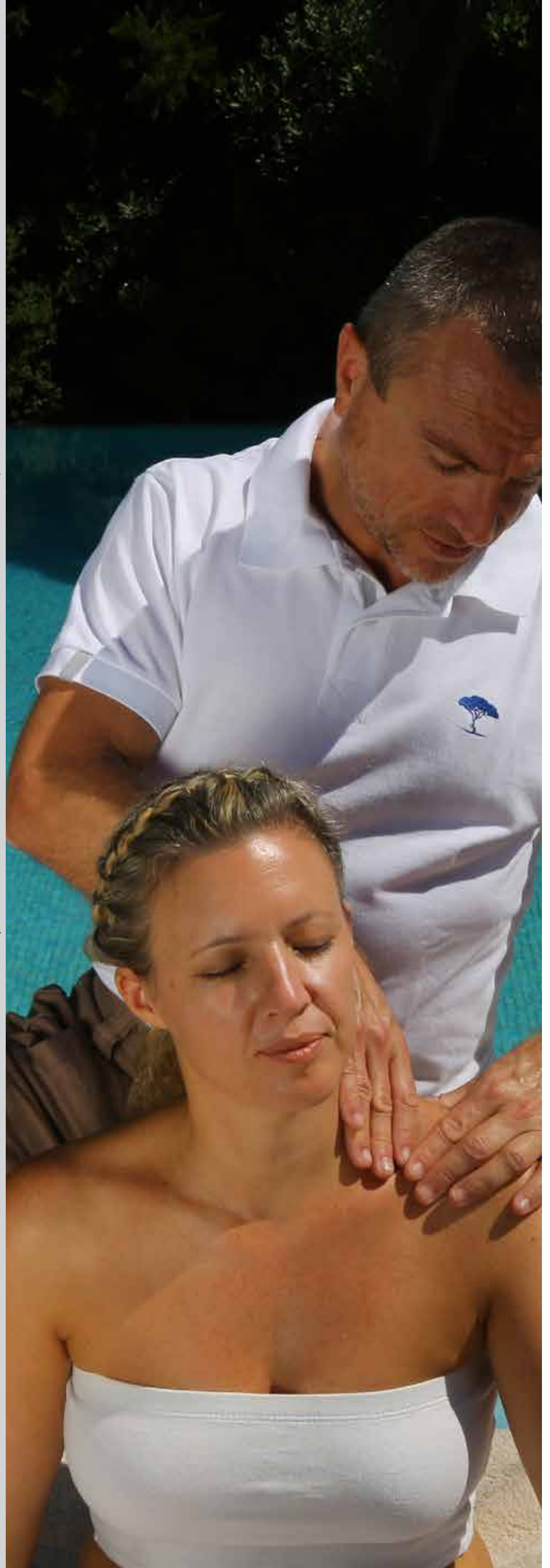
It is no wonder that so many people experience back and neck pain every year.

What **is astonishing is that so many people choose to ignore their back and neck pain** year after year, trying to convince themselves it is not that bad or that it will go away on its own.

**Back pain may be common, but it is absolutely not normal.**

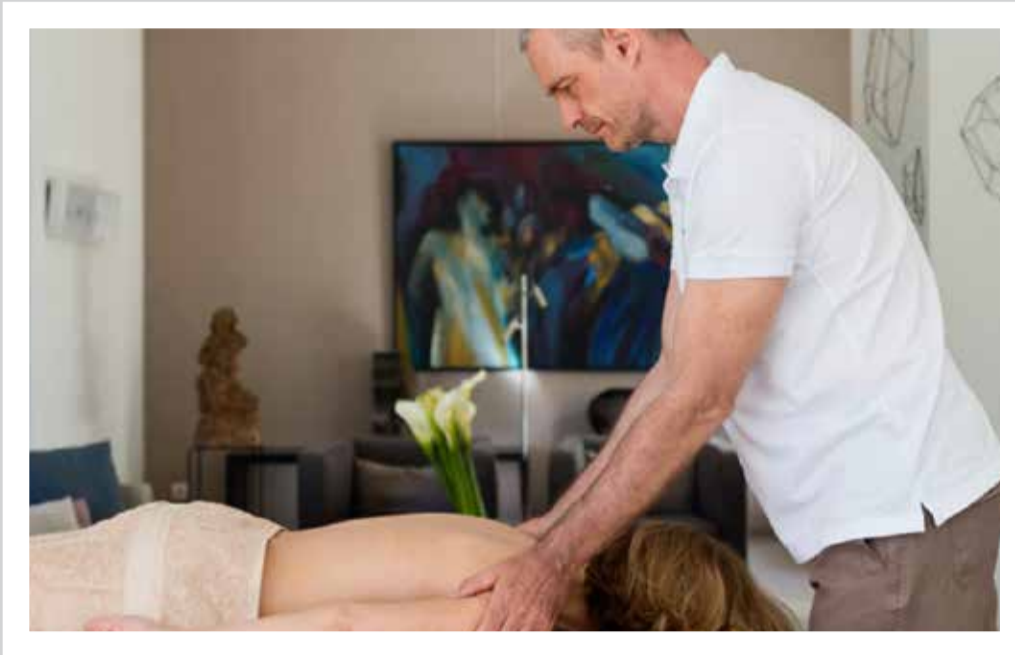
There are actually a lot of serious conditions that can cause your back to begin to hurt, such as muscle sprain or strain, slipped vertebrae or disc, a tear or hyperextension to the supporting muscles or tendons, arthritis, ...

These concerns can develop as a result of a myriad of environmental issues, such as having poor posture, prolonged sedentary activity, car crash, sporting accident, stress, heavy lifting, and so on.





# CONCLUSION



**So do not wait any longer, seek the advice of a specialist.**

Meantime, as prevention as well as for treating your problems, try to have a healthy lifestyle, to regularly stretch your muscles, to have a proper posture, to do sport exercise like yoga or pilates, to practice self-massage and of course use the services of a massage therapist.

**Blue Tree Massage supports you in your back pain,** with massages adapted to each situation. We work at your home in the Alpes Maritimes, or at our studio.

We also offer our customers specific yoga, stretching and relaxation exercises to prevent back pain.

So stop having back problems and come see us!

**Take care of your body!**

Book yourself  
a well deserved  
**MASSAGE!**