

# Lumbar Combination Syndrome



Congratulations, you have been diagnosed as having **Lumbar Combination Syndrome**. What is that you may ask? Well there are many types of low back problems and this is one. It presents with some common and predictable pain sites and problems.

There are two very common conditions in the lumbar spine, which are opposite of each other. They are lumbar derangement syndrome and lumbar dysfunction syndrome. Your condition is a combination of both.

The derangement syndrome is often caused by activity or positions that increase the pressure on the disc in the front of the spine. Examples are sitting, bending, lifting, and twisting while bent. This is often made better when bending backwards.

The dysfunction syndrome is the result of either spraining the joints at the back of the spine or having restricted movement in them. This will affect you more when standing. Often it is worse at the end of the day, in addition to pain with twisting and reaching. Pain can be relieved by bending forward.

Normally in the combination syndrome, one of these will be more dominant than the other. A typical day may start out with being stiff in the morning and pain with bending. This may be brushing your teeth, bending to put on your make up, or shaving. You will be stiff after sitting in the car as well. Walking around relieves it, but you will get tired after a while. Standing throughout the day makes you worse to a point where you need to sit down. However, sitting for too long will make you stiff again. It sounds like you are damned if you do, and damned if you don't.

Problems like this can come on immediately or over a period of hours. Often it will be worse the day after the injury. Pain will result from movement that requires the joint to twist or bend more than it is able to.

When both the front and the back of the spine are affected you may present with the combination syndrome. The bottom line is, you now have a back problem that you can affect even now in a good or bad way depending on what you do.

You sprained the disc in front of the spine which is dependent on disc pressure and the posterior joints of the spine which are affected by arching back and standing. The symptoms can range from minimal pain to extreme pain upon all movement.





The best way for you to treat this problem is to note what position causes the most pain. If it was bending or sitting, you need to stand and arch back. If you were standing or arching, then you need to sit or bend forward to some degree.

Sometimes the pain will go into the leg and there may be numbness or pins and needles felt. This is a sign of the nerves being affected as well. As things get better, these should get less or get closer to the spine.

When you do the exercises, they should not increase your leg pain or go further out into the leg. If they do, then you are either pushing the exercises too much or moving in the wrong direction. Check with your clinician.

Your clinician will show you ways to do things differently during the day to minimize the pressure on the disc and the joints. This will mean that the pain should decrease, but the first thing you will notice is that movement has improved.

Treatment will vary depending on the pain level, what stage, and severity of your problem. Between you and the clinician, you will be able to manage this type of back problem well.

Notes from Your Physical Therapist:

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**If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Above & Beyond Physical Therapy.**

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