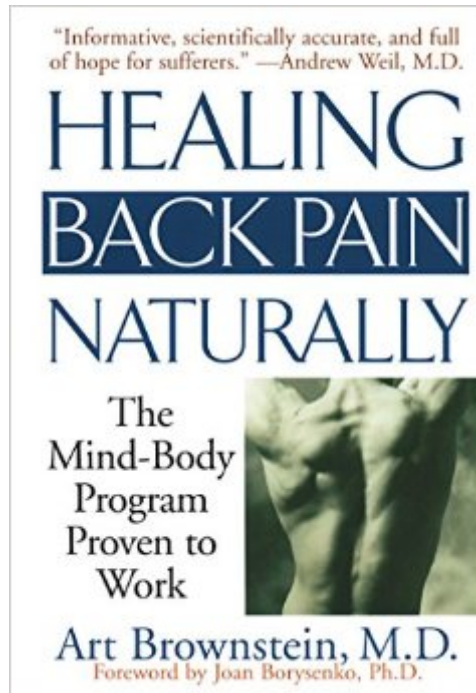


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# Healing Back Pain Naturally: The Mind-Body Program Proven To Work



## Synopsis

After suffering from back pain for twenty years, Dr. Art Brownstein shares the cure that worked for him and thousands of others. Back pain is a global epidemic and the number one cause of disability in the US for people under forty-five. Seven out of ten people in the US will suffer serious back pain at some stage in their lives. Sharing his own story of surgery, painkiller dependency, and severe depression, Dr. Brownstein guides you through the recovery program that gave him his life back. Today, he runs a medical practice, bikes, surfboards, teaches yoga, and leads an active life "free of pain!" Dr. Brownstein covers topics such as The Straw that Broke the Camel's Back, Your Mind, Your Body and Back Pain, Moving Past Your Pain, The Back to Life Stretching Program, Strengthening Your Back, Stress Management for Your Back, Eating for a Healthy Back, Back to Work: Slow and Steady Wins the Race, Back to Play: An Essential Ingredient for Healing, Back to Life: Emotional and Spiritual lessons for Healing, and special sections on emergency back care, recommended reading and resources.

## Book Information

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Pocketbooks (June 1, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0743424646

ISBN-13: 978-0743424646

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (130 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #59,134 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #18 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Diseases & Physical Ailments > Backache](#) #96 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Diseases & Physical Ailments > Pain Management](#) #133 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Exercise & Fitness > Injuries & Rehabilitation](#)

## Customer Reviews

I would give this book 6 stars if I could. The yoga-based exercises Dr. Brownstein describes and illustrates so clearly saved me from the expense, pain, and risk of a lumbar laminectomy to remove a synovial cyst at the right L4/L5 facet joint. I didn't even know I had a back problem until I had an MRI this spring. All my symptoms were in my legs and hips, beginning with intermittent pain and numbness a few years ago, then progressing to fairly severe sciatica last fall. I was not

incapacitated, but just moving around for daily activities was at best unpleasant. It was not fun to have severe cramps in my gluteus, along with sharp, shooting pains down the backs of my legs, and numbness in my toes and soles of my feet. I was advised that surgery was the only long-term solution. I attended Dean Ornish's Preventive Medicine Retreat in mid-April, 1999, where I met Dr. Lee Lipsenthal, and asked him if he had any knowledge about lumbar cysts. He strongly recommended Dr. Brownstein's book. Participants in the Retreat were given some instruction in Yoga, but Dr. Lipsenthal said Dr. Brownstein gave many more stretches aimed specifically at relieving back pain by developing better muscular conditioning. I consulted a surgeon on April 20, and scheduled a lumbar laminectomy for May 17. I bought a copy of *Healing Back Pain Naturally* on April 22, and began practicing the Yoga positions. On May 3, I was still having significant pain. I could not carry a box of newspapers weighing 25 to 30 pounds out to my curb for recycling without stopping to take the weight off my spine. I started doing the stretches twice a day for about 45 minutes each time.

I bought this book over a year ago when my lower back pain became intractable. I had been in a car accident nine years earlier and through the years the pain got progressively worse and the episodes longer. Brownstein is good at assembling a lot of information and advice in a single, very readable book, but none of it is particularly original. The most compelling, and also most problematic, part of the book is Brownstein's discussion of his own ordeal with back pain. I cringe at books that attribute physical pain or disease to psychological trauma. Brownstein indulges in a very typically American mentality that equates physical illness with moral or emotional deficits. He sadly relies on John Sarno, author of *Mind Over Back Pain*, in his chapter on stress and back pain. Sarno invented a diagnosis, accepted by no one in mainstream medicine, that repressed anger creates muscle tension which creates back pain. He rejects the now proven fact that discs cause pain, i.e. there are pain receptors in the outer layers of the disc that send signals to the brain when the disc nucleus ruptures and irritates the nerve endings in the disc. The lower spine itself is the main relay station for the peripheral nervous system and any disorder, be it muscular or due to a spinal anomaly, will trigger plenty of pain receptors. Brownstein also focuses a lot on self-destructive behavior that leads to back pain. Here we run into the classic mind-body mess that is so appealing to readers because it provides a sort of Puritanical religious hope that if you just get your life together, you will overcome your pain. This notion is nonsense.

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