



Understanding and Healing Lifting Injuries

© 2005 Lawrence Gold, C.H.S.E.

Every occupation has its hazards. Occupational hazards to movement health can be minimized or avoided altogether by an appropriate self-care regimen and reversed where they have already occurred.

One word can vastly simplify our understanding of lifting injuries. That word is, "musclebound."

We know how overtraining with weights can lead to the condition of muscular restriction and pain known as being musclebound. It's a conditioning problem, really, an over-conditioning problem, of the muscles being trained. They get trained to tighten, stay tight, and get tighter and tighter.

The same problem applies to repetitive lifting movements; the muscles involved, those of the back, get conditioned to tighten and stay tight as the body becomes ever-ready to do the lifting action. Tightness leads to muscle fatigue (soreness), stiffness (muscular tension) and the tendency to spasm (fixed, painful contraction). Lift-and-twist injures are a variation of the same problem.

Almost all lifting injuries and back trouble stem from being musclebound in the muscles of the back. Disc problems come from neighboring vertebrae being pulled too closely together by back muscles. Nerve pinches (such as sciatica) come from the same cause.

That means that back injuries are *not* a consequence of muscle weakness, but of over-conditioning. Muscles may feel weak due to fatigue because fatigue *feels* weak.

Because being musclebound affects *all* movements, "good lifting techniques" are often insufficient to prevent injury and injuries often reappear.

The practical question becomes how to *de*-condition overconditioned muscles.

The answer is deceptively obvious: training in muscular control, which includes strength, relaxation and coordination – all three.

Muscular control cannot be acquired by massage, drugs, or external manipulation because the brain controls muscular tension, not muscles, themselves. What is necessary is to unlearn tension habits and *learn* better muscular control. Better control – less chance of injury.

That's where somatic training comes in. ("Somatic" means "the body experienced and controlled from within.") A person can, by specific training, recover from being musclebound and develop a more ideal, *safer* range of strength, flexibility, and comfort. For people whose daily work makes them musclebound, such remedial training is a necessity. People need to undo the residual effects of their repetitive motions to avoid the occupational hazard of their work.

Three options for somatic training are available: audio-CD/workbook instruction, group classes, and private sessions (for pre-existing injuries), by appointment.

contact: 505 699-8284
awareness@somatics.com