

“Giving you back the keys to unlock your potential.”

Low back pain is rated as one of the most disabling health disorders in the Western world. Helen Preston, clinical director at Prestons Health in Peterborough and her team now offer targeted treatments which allow sufferers to manage this debilitating condition effectively

Research into low back pain has progressed in recent times. The team at Prestons Health are using this knowledge to create bespoke treatment plans to tackle the problem in a number of ways. Clinical director Helen Preston bases her treatment on the latest scientific developments which understands pain as a process which can be 'driven' by many different factors. This helps explain why some problems seem to recover normally but other problems just won't go away. Hence she uses a holistic approach which acknowledges that mental and physical health often go hand in hand.

“People are often unaware that many of their daily lifestyle choices play a role in back pain,” explains Helen. “Our approach addresses the long term causes of back pain. It emphasises the need to help achieve acute pain relief when required, but also enables patients to understand that they have an untapped potential for improvement themselves. Treating back pain is no longer about simply taking a pain killer and getting your back manipulated.”

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR CLIENTS? AT PRESTONS, TREATMENT ENCOMPASSES THE FOLLOWING:

- An initial appointment lasting up to one hour, ensuring that there is time to listen to your individual story. No patient with low back pain presents the same, so hearing the context behind your pain is key to determining an effective individualised treatment plan.
- Ensuring that treatment is appropriate for the condition. During the initial visit, the physiotherapists at Prestons triage their patients carefully to eliminate the possibility of more serious causes. In the majority of cases, the cause of low back pain is benign, but it's important to screen for other problems. If found, patients will be signposted to the most appropriate health care, such as referral back to their GP or Consultant for further investigation.
- All clients will receive a full examination with hands on assessment of the back. Some patients come to the clinic having already been scanned, and often having the results re-explained can help to lessen fears and reframe thoughts about the condition. Understanding



that scan results can often show normal age-related disc changes (no more unusual than grey hair and wrinkles) can remove stress and unnecessary worry and form an important milestone in a person's recovery from low back pain.

- After assessment, a treatment programme is devised, targeting the individual factors driving the back pain. Research shows that there are a number of triggers. Looking at factors such as sleep, stress resilience, physical activity and sedentary behaviour are all part of the holistic treatment programme.
- Many people feel better after manipulation and hands-on therapy and this is often an integral part of the Prestons treatment.

But patients will learn that this treatment does not 'put the spine back into place.' While it can help to reduce pain and muscle tone, it's essentially a short term fix. Progressing the treatment to include how to move normally again, and prescribing very simple exercises, can yield successful results very quickly.

- The Prestons approach gives patients the

ability to become active participants in their own condition, rather than passive recipients of a treatment. “The realisation that patients do not need to be 'fixed' can be liberating for them,” says Helen Preston. “If people always feel that they are dependent on someone else to cure them, they will struggle to see long lasting success.”

- Patients will learn how to move normally and confidently. Our bodies are designed to move, and don't function well if we keep still. Pain can cause us to be overly cautious or fearful, prompting us to move in a different way, but Prestons Chartered Physiotherapists will teach you how to relax, lift and bend. This enables clients to regain vital body strength and conditioning which helps to guard against the recurrence of back pain. It also encourages them to regard their back as a strong and resilient part of the body, so they can use it with confidence and ultimately enhance their general sense of wellbeing.

Prestons website is regularly updated with new research and self empowerment information for patients to use.

Visit www.prestonshealth.co.uk/selfcare

- For further information or to make an appointment for a consultation, please telephone: 01733 565911.

Prestons Health is at 29 Alexandra Rd, Peterborough PE1 3DE and also at Oundle Medical practice in Glapthorn Road, Oundle.

