



## Low Back Pain

Excerpt from San Luis Sports Therapy PIER Document

**PROBLEM:** LOW BACK PAIN

**INTERVENTION:** **Classification:** An evidence-based approach that identifies subgroups of patients based on response to a specific intervention rather than labeling based on pathoanatomic findings.<sup>4</sup>

- **MANUAL PHYSICAL THERAPY & EXERCISE**
- **DIRECTIONAL PREFERENCE EXERCISE**
- **NEUROMUSCULAR RE-EDUCATION & STABILIZATION EXERCISE**

**EVIDENCE:** Oxford Evidence Grade= A (Level 1a studies)

Patients managed with this treatment-based classification system experience significant decreases in pain, disability, and work restrictions compared to traditional care.<sup>4</sup> Therapists can use predictive clinical examination findings to match patients to a specific treatment. This may include: manual physical therapy and exercise,<sup>5, 6</sup> specific exercises in a particular direction,<sup>7-9</sup> core stabilization exercise,<sup>10, 11</sup> and traction.<sup>4</sup>

### **REFER:**

**Acute LBP:** Patients with the following findings are likely to experience a 50% reduction in disability and pain within 1 week 90% of the time when treated with manual physical therapy and exercise<sup>5, 6</sup>: 1) Current episode of symptoms is < 2-3 weeks; 2) Minimal fear of movement; and 3) Symptoms don't extend below the knee.

**Chronic LBP:** Patients who have 3 or more of the following findings can achieve a 50% reduction in disability within 8 weeks 67% of the time when treated with a core stabilization and neuromuscular re-education program:<sup>10</sup> 1) Straight Leg Raise test >91°; 2) Aberrant movements during lumbar flexion; 3) Positive prone instability test and 4) Age < 40 years.

Based on a trial of 1334 patients with acute LBP, manual therapy and exercise is now recommended over a "wait and see" approach and has been adopted and subsidized in Great Britain as part of a preferred practice pattern.<sup>14,15</sup>

Patients who demonstrate a directional preference (i.e. symptoms centralize and/or reduce) on movement examination are more likely to have a significant reduction (50%) in pain and disability.<sup>8,9</sup> We can help determine if your patient has a directional preference.

\*References noted can be found on original PIER document.