



## Eliminate back pain with the Swopper chair that promotes active sitting

Sunday, December 05, 2004 by: Mike Adams

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Back pain is a widespread problem in modern society, and a lot of that pain comes from, believe it or not, lack of exercise of skeletal muscles, lower back muscles, abdominal muscles and so on. So many of us have desk jobs today, and we spend a huge amount of time sitting in a chair that trains our musculoskeletal system to be lazy.

Today I've got some exciting news about a product called Swopper. The Swopper chair is something I purchased several months ago, and have been using ever since. I've found it to be flat out the most impressive active [sitting](#) chair I've ever used. I've tried several active sitting products over the years, and I know quite a bit about [back pain](#) as well. Let me share with you why this chair could be the single most important investment you'll ever make in protecting the health of your back and eliminating back pain for the rest of your life.

But, before we get started, let me remind you that this is an unpaid, unsolicited product review as are all my product reviews. The manufacturer of the Swopper chair isn't even aware that I'm doing this review. I did not get a free chair or any compensation. I purchased my chair on the internet, at full price.

You should also know that I have a good deal of personal experience regarding back pain. I suffered severe back pain for more than 10 years before I finally reformed my health and began enhancing my abdominal, lower back and spinal strength through a variety of exercise routines and nutritional changes. When I was 21 my back pain began, and the pain was severe even when I was just sitting. The longer I sat, the more intense the back pain would get. Over a period of a couple of years, this condition worsened to the point where I couldn't sit for more than 30 minutes without experiencing severe back pain. That meant I couldn't go to a movie and sit through it without experiencing excruciating pain. I couldn't fly to go on vacation anywhere, because sitting on an airplane was one of the most painful experiences I could imagine. I couldn't drive in a car very far either, because I'd have to stop every hour or so and get out to walk around and stretch. In fact, the situation was so bad that I created a computer workstation so that I could lie down on my back and do my computer work with a



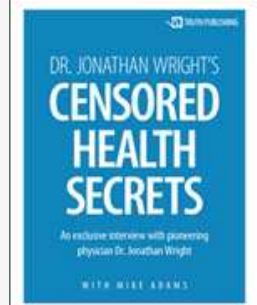
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keyboard and monitor that were suspended in the air over my body. It sounds ridiculous, I know, but when you have intense pain you'll do just about anything to relieve it.

In my case, I was dedicated to doing whatever it took to eliminate the pain other than going through surgery, because I knew that spinal surgery was a very dangerous procedure that was also rarely effective. The idea of a doctor cutting into my lower back and poking around with sharp instruments during "exploratory surgery" is not my idea of a good health strategy. I decided to take care of my back pain from the inside out, by fundamentally changing my approach to healthy living.

One of the things that I now do is regular stretching and [physical exercise](#). I took up yoga and then several years later began doing Pilates when I learned about that. But beyond the physical actions, I also stopped sitting in chairs that had backs, choosing to sit on stool chairs instead. This forced me to hold up my back using my own back muscles. It sounds insanely simple, I know, but the truth is that most people who sit don't hold themselves up. They rely on the chair to do the work for them, and as a result the lower back muscles that should have been holding them up begin to atrophy.

Without exercise, movement and strengthening of those muscles, you end up with extremely weak muscles in your abdomen, lower back and even your hips -- muscles that really can't hold you up without hurting. Today I recognize this was the entire source of my back pain. My muscles were simply too weak to hold me up.

I found sitting on stool chairs to be quite exhausting at first. I couldn't hold my back up for very long; I just didn't have the strength and stamina to do it. But over a period of several months I began training myself to sit on stools and to hold my own back up while I was working on the computer. Of course, over time my back strengthened, just like any back will, to the point where I could hold myself up without any pain whatsoever. Today, I can sit on a stool chair and do hours and hours of work without experiencing any pain at all. Now I can sit on an airplane and relax into the seat without experiencing excruciating pain. I can sit through a movie, or a long trip. All my back pain disappeared as I began to strengthen my abdominal and back muscles.

What does all this have to do with the Swopper product and what I call this miraculous chair? Well, even though I trained myself to sit up straight and hold my own back up, if I'd had the Swopper, I could have trained myself much faster and been much more effective in regaining both flexibility and strength.

You see the Swopper encourages something called "active sitting." Active sitting means you're sitting, but you're stabilizing your torso the entire time. The Swopper chair is mounted on a giant spring. It looks like a mushroom on a column. The column is made from a steel tube mounted on giant springs that can sway back and forth a little bit as you sit. If you sit on a Swopper chair, you'll notice that it bounces up and down... you can kind of rock and roll on the chair, you can sway forwards and backwards, left and right. You get a lot of pelvic movement, which is great exercise for your pelvis and lower back.

When you're sitting on the Swopper, you're engaged in active sitting. You are forced to hold up your own back and to assume good [posture](#) in this chair, whether you want to or not. Failure to hold your back up will mean you just fall off the chair. If you're going to stay in this chair, you're going to engage those muscles.

Now this is not necessarily an easy thing for people to do at first. In fact, people who've been sitting in traditional office chairs or what I call "lazy chairs," will find it exhausting to sit on the Swopper. They may only be able to sit on it for one minute. I'm sure that's where I was several years ago. I probably couldn't have handled more than 30 seconds on the chair.

It's amazing but true: our backs get incredibly weak if we haven't trained ourselves to sit correctly. Get yourself a Swopper chair and use it for a few minutes a day, working up to half an hour a day, and then finally an hour or two. What you ultimately want to do is use it as your full time chair, which will give you an incredibly strong back. Your pelvic flexibility will improve, your sense of balance will be enhanced, your abdominal and lower back muscles will strengthen. But here's the most important part: if you're like most people, **your lower back pain will either be reduced or eliminated from this active sitting exercise.**

And by the way, this occurs even if you've had a surgeon diagnose you with a physical defect in your spine. Many times, spinal and lower back pains are actually misdiagnosed, and often doctors can take an X-ray or an MRI and even show you something that looks like a physical defect. They then tell you "Look! See here, there's this gap or here's this thing sideways... and that's your pain right there!" In reality, a good number of these things aren't physical defects at all, they're the result of having untrained muscles.

## sensitivity

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When your muscles aren't firm, they don't hold things in place correctly. This can give you a lazy spine, or you can have lazy muscles that cause your hips to be out of alignment. Your spine could be twisted in one way or another that could be diagnosed as a physical defect. I'm not saying that every physical defect diagnosis is fiction, but I am saying that probably 80% of them are. There's a book on this called "Healing Back Pain" by Dr. John Sarno, where he talks about TMS or "Tension Myositis Syndrome" -- and explains that as much as 90% of all back pain can be cured by reducing stress in your life. He also contends that the vast majority of back pain is not a physical defect; nothing's been torn, nothing's out of place, nothing's leaking out of your spine -- it's just bad training that can be reversed.

My point here is that by using this chair and training your back to sit in an active manner, you will very likely experience a reduction in your back pain. It won't be immediate. In fact, your back may hurt more when you start using the chair. The reason is because now your back is exhausted in addition to being weak. But in time, your muscles will adapt. Of course the adaptation will be faster if you engage in good nutritional habits. You should be getting plenty of protein and not be consuming metabolic disruptors that interfere with the body's adaptation process. If you're going to begin practicing active sitting, [good nutrition](#) is a key component that will support your goal.

Now, with all of that said, the Swopper is, in my experience, the very best chair that I've ever tried for training the back and engaging in active sitting. It is constructed of high quality materials, made with robust German engineering, of which I'm a great admirer. This is not some cheap plastic chair. And it better not be since it costs about \$500! But let's talk about that for just a moment. I've seen lazy chairs priced as much as \$1,000. They have all these hydraulics and cushions and backs and other features, but really all they do is allow you to sit in a lazy way with greater comfort.

I don't think that's what you want out of a good chair. To me, if you're going to spend a lot of money on a chair, you should get one that's going to enhance your health, not one that's just going to enhance the comfort of being lazy and unhealthy.

Another thing to consider is that the cost of having back pain is enormous compared to what you'll spend to prevent or reduce it. Just a few visits to a doctor who specializes in back pain, or a couple of X-rays can easily exceed the entire cost of this chair. And this chair, based on the looks of it, will probably last a decade or more, even with heavy use.

My advice, if you're looking to make an investment in your health and reduce back pain, would be to consider buying a Swopper chair. One other thing you should think about is that it won't take any more time out of your day to sit in this chair than it would already take to sit in a typical office chair. You'll be exercising and getting your work done at the same time. Several months from now, you could have a stronger back and abdomen, you could be experiencing a reduction in back pain, and it wouldn't have taken you an extra time at all.

I strongly urge anyone reading this who has any back pain whatsoever, or who just wants better pelvic flexibility and better pelvic strength to take a serious look at the Swopper chair, or some other kind of active sitting chair. The Swopper is the only active sitting chair I'm recommending since I've used it for several months and I've seen the quality of construction -- it is a high quality chair that looks virtually unbreakable. My one complaint is that the chair is a bit hard. It's hard on your sitting bones and may take a bit of getting used to, especially if you've been sitting in luxury chairs. But, even though you might feel like you're roughing it for a time, in the end the investment will be well worth it.

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**About the author:** *Mike Adams is a consumer health advocate with a mission to teach personal and planetary health to the public. He has authored more than 1,500 articles and dozens of reports, guides and interviews on natural health topics, impacting the lives of millions of readers around the world who are experiencing phenomenal health benefits from reading his articles. Adams is an honest, independent journalist and accepts no money or commissions on the third-party products he writes about or the companies he promotes. In 2007, Adams launched EcoLEDs, a maker of super bright LED light bulbs that are 1000% more energy efficient than incandescent lights. He also founded an environmentally-friendly online retailer called [BetterLifeGoods.com](#) that uses retail profits to help support consumer advocacy programs. He's also a noted technology pioneer and founded a software company in 1993 that developed the [HTML email newsletter software](#) currently powering the NewsTarget subscriptions. Adams volunteers his time to serve as the executive director of the [Consumer Wellness Center](#), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and regularly pursues cycling, nature photography, Capoeira and Pilates. He's also author of numerous health books published by [Truth Publishing](#) and is the creator of several consumer-oriented grassroots campaigns, including the [Spam. Don't Buy It!](#) campaign, and the free downloadable [Honest Food Guide](#). He also created the free reference sites*

[HerbReference.com](http://HerbReference.com) and [HealingFoodReference.com](http://HealingFoodReference.com). Adams believes in free speech, free access to nutritional supplements and the ending of corporate control over medicines, genes and seeds. Known by his callsign, the 'Health Ranger,' Adams posts his missions statements, health statistics and health photos at [www.HealthRanger.org](http://www.HealthRanger.org)

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I fully agree with this article, the Swopper is fantastic!

- **Jose**

I had back pain for years and ended up having to have surgery. The surgeon said it was the worst bulging disk he had ever seen. Although the surgery was successful, I was still in some pain when sitting at my desk working. I decided to try a Swopper. It has been great. My lower back muscles have gotten stronger and I am able to work for longer hours without pain. The folks at 1stErgo.com helped me out and explained how to sit correctly on Swopper.

- **Dave**

I got a used lower back pain chair by designerseating and it was very cheap. It's the aeron mesh chair and it adjust to the back ergonomically.

- **used lower back pain chair designerseating**

The Swopper has been fantastic from me. I wasn't sure if it was right but the chair guy at <http://www.workchairs.com> was really helpful in helping me choose the right one.

- **Jennifer Todd**

For people who can't afford this chair, an alternative that offers "active" sitting is to sit on a large exercise ball. This requires effort to stay upright as well, and exercises the core muscles around the waist and back.

- **Lin Buffalo Grove IL**

This chair actually did not work out for me. I have had two back surgeries so my experience may be different than others - but if you are compromised this is something to consider. I tried to use it for a few months but found it increasing my back pain. I suspect this is due to having an unstable joint (L5-S1) moving over a range of motion it can't tolerate. Maybe someday I can work up to sitting in it but for now I prefer the kneeling chairs or just a normal chair that does not move. For both these chairs I do not use back support and I get up and walk around about every 15-30 mins or so. Debating on whether to send back to Ebay while I can still fetch a good price.

- Mike San Diego USA



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