



Car Accident – Not Just a Neck Whiplash

By Victoria L Magown

Frequently after a car accident, one will not only suffer with neck pain and headaches, but experience back pain also. Sometimes the back pain does not start until months after, so you don't realize the car accident caused it.

Depending on the placement of the shoulder and lap seat belts, one can experience upper, mid or low back pain. Occasionally, the entire back is painful with spasms.

So, what actually happens to the body during the impact when your car is rear ended?

Since the shoulder seat belt only restrains the left shoulder of the driver, the right shoulder is allowed to “whip” with the head and neck. When this happens, the torso is rotated left and remains in that position until appropriately treated. As you can visualize, the left rotation of the torso could significantly contribute to upper, mid or low back pain.

Also, in most cases, the person is stopped with their right foot on the brake. During impact, the right foot, ankle, knee and hip are “jammed” with all the connecting fascia and muscles tightening to protect the bones from fractures. Then they remain that way, leaving minimal joint space. Consequently, the person begins walking with a dysfunctional gait, contributing to the back pain.

Finally, it is not just a back problem, the abdominal fascia and muscles are involved also. The strong impact of the shoulder and lap seat belts on the rectus abdominis can cause upper and lower Trigger Points (TrPs) which refer pain through to the mid and low back.

The oblique muscles, which are the primary rotators of the lumbar spine, are impacted as well. So treating only the back fascia and muscles will not resolve the back pain completely.

Back pain, as well as, neck/head pain from a car accident is one of our specialties. Call MyoRehab at 505-872-3100 and schedule your appointment today.

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