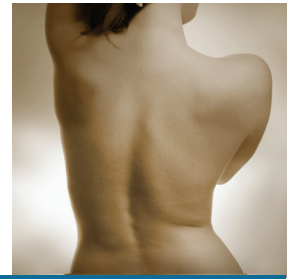




**PRO·MOTION**  
PHYSICAL THERAPY

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# Case Studies



## Patient Profile

### Patient:

A 61-year-old female high-school cook

### Mechanism of injury:

The patient's orthopedic surgeon referred her to physical therapy for an aching left leg and foot that has bothered her for five weeks, suspected to be caused by a long-term lower back problem.

### Symptoms:

Her symptoms had an insidious onset initially in the lumbar spine and a gradual build-up, culminating in an intermittent ache in the left thigh, knee and ankle, which she rated an 8/10 at worst. No anesthesia or parathesia was reported, and pain was worse during the first three hours of standing during her work day and riding in her car for 15 minutes.

### Additional background:

The patient had not utilized physical therapy for her low back pain, left knee or left ankle pain. A recent lumbar spine MRI identified spinal stenosis at several levels. Additional MRIs of the left knee and ankle identified moderate arthritis in both. The patient had been receiving chiropractic care for the lumbar spine for the past three years with little improvement.

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## Pinpointing the cause of a patient's pain is a vital step in choosing the optimal course of treatment for complete pain resolution.

### Initial assessment

A Pro-Motion physical therapist identified patient lumbar spine pain with AROM and PROM of the lumbar spine. The L5/S1 motion segment was identified as the area of main pain. The patient had poor activation of the lumbar spine-stabilizing muscles. Tightness was noted in both hip flexors.

### Treatment Protocol

The initial treatment protocol focused on increasing the patient's lumbar spine mobility at the left L5/S1 level and decreasing pain by specific lumbar spine mobilization. The patient was instructed to perform bilateral hip flexor muscle stretches at home. Specific exercises to activate the deep lumbar spine-stabilizing muscles were also explained and required three times daily as part of the home exercise program.

### Treatment Outcome

The woman attended 12 physical therapy sessions and achieved 100% recovery, which included complete pain resolution in the lumbar spine and left thigh with full lumbar spine active and passive range of motion. There was good activation of the lumbar spine deep core-stabilizing muscles and normal extensibility bilateral hip flexor muscles.

### Conclusion

This patient responded very well to the manipulative therapy techniques used to treat her. The lumbar spine pain and left leg pain were eliminated. Stiffness remained in the left knee and the left ankle, attributable to local arthritic changes in both joints.

### Discussion

The physical therapists at Pro-Motion Physical Therapy are trained to administer comprehensive initial evaluations aimed at identifying the specific impairment that is producing a patient's pain. This patient presented with lumbar spine pain, left knee pain and left ankle pain. The three areas of pain were all involved in her pain pattern. The majority of the pain originated in the lumbar spine, which was responsible for some but not all of her left knee and ankle pain. While the lumbar spine MRI identified the specific area of pathology, it did not correlate with her clinical findings. In 12 visits, this patient experienced 100% pain relief for the first time in three years.

**For questions or further discussion of the findings in this case study – or to refer a patient to Pro-Motion Physical Therapy, call 815-521-4400.**