

# **Why Your Body Hurts - Even When You're "Doing Everything Right"**

You workout regularly. You eat the right things. You even foam roll now and then. And yet...your back aches when you get out of bed. Your shoulder flares up when you press overhead. And your knees hate stairs.

Sound familiar?

You're not alone. In fact, many of the clients I see are fit people whose bodies are not cooperating with them. They're doing everything "right" and still experience pain on a regular basis. But here's the truth: Pain isn't just a punishment for bad habits. It's a signal. A language. And if you learn to speak that language and listen, it can teach you exactly what needs to change.

## **Pain Isn't the Problem - It's the Alarm**

We're conditioned to think of pain as a problem. But more often than not, it's a symptom - a message from our body that something is off. That shoulder ache? It might not be a shoulder problem at all. It could be stress, poor sleep, a lack of core control, or subtle movement compensation that's been building in the background.

Pain is usually the last thing to show up in a dysfunctional system. That's why it often feels like it comes out of nowhere. But I promise - it doesn't.

## **The Most Overlooked Reasons Your Body Hurts**

Let's break down a few common reasons I see in my work as a personal trainer and movement specialist:

### **1. You're Strong But Not Stable**

Lifting weights makes you stronger, but if you haven't built control and stability first, that strength stacks on top of a shaky foundation. Think

about glutes that don't activate, or a core that doesn't brace. If those areas aren't working properly, others have to do more to get your body to do what you're asking it to do. And under load, during a workout, it's even worse.

## **2. You're Moving Well - Until You're Not**

Most people move fine...until they don't. Subtle compensations like one-sided weight shifts, rib flares, or limited mobility in the ankles or thoracic spine are easy to miss - until your body is challenged. Then it starts complaining.

## **3. Your Lifestyle is Sabotaging Your Recovery**

Training is only part of the equation. If you're sleeping 5 hours a night, eating junk, or glued to your desk all day, your body can't recover well enough to adapt. The effects of stress, sleep, and nutrition show up in your movement more than you think - good or bad.

# **How to Do a Personal "Movement Audit"**

I coach clients through movement audits all the time. You don't need fancy equipment or a PT degree to do one - just a camera, a wall, and a little curiosity.

### **> Wall Overhead Reach Test**

Stand with your back, heels, and butt against a wall. Raise both arms overhead and try to touch the wall. Can't do it without arching your back? Does it cause pain? That suggests limited thoracic mobility or poor core control, or both. It's likely that overhead movements are hard for you and your body tends to compensate during them.

### **> Toe Touch**

Can you touch your toes? Many people cannot. If you can't touch your toes and notice a big stretch in your hamstrings or glutes when you try, that's normal. You likely need to do more things that mimic that motion with limited range of motion (because full range of motion is proving difficult right now) until those muscles are able to go through more range of motion. If you feel your back during this test - either pain or a stretch - you may have some compensation going on. This could be happening because of underactive glutes or an unstable lower back that

your body is guarding against (likely due to a core that isn't bracing effectively).

### **> Breath Check**

Lie down and place one hand on your chest, the other on your belly. Take a deep breath. If your chest rises more, you're likely stuck in a shallow, stress-based breathing pattern. This can increase pain and tension in your body. More stress = more pain. This can also mean your diaphragm is not working properly or needs to learn a new pattern. Your diaphragm is a muscle too, and must be trained.

## **What Your Movement Says About Your Life**

Here's the thing: your body doesn't lie. The way you move can tell you a lot about the way you live.

- **Tight shoulders?** You might be stressed or spending hours hunched at a computer.
- **Stiff hips?** You might be sitting too much or not getting enough glute work in your training
- **Low energy during workouts?** Check your sleep, hydration, and protein intake.

Movement reveals what your habits are hiding.

## **What To Do Next: Start Small and Specific**

Don't feel overwhelmed. Many of us deal with limitations/deficiencies in multiple areas and you don't need to overhaul your life in one day to see progress. Start by focusing on one lifestyle habit. Are you lacking in hydration? Sleep? Tackle the one that seems doable at first. Give yourself an easy win. Practice your new habit for at least 2 weeks. Maybe more to make sure it is solidified. Then move on to the next habit you want to improve.

As you work on this new habit, log the progress of one movement check. See if and how it improves as your habits change.

For example:

Toe Touch Test

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Sleep Quality (log your sleep. Did you wake up rested or groggy? What did the movement test reveal?)

Based on what you find, make adjustments. If you were able to complete the test better than before, you're on the right track. If the test was more limited than normal, more work is to be done with your habit(s).

The goal is awareness, not perfection. Don't beat yourself up. Instead, get curious and see what is in your control to improve.

## **Final Thoughts: Your Body Wants to Work With You**

Your body is on your team. It doesn't want to be in pain, it wants you to notice and pay attention. Pain is often the last straw in a long line of missed signals. But with a few simple tools and enough curiosity to check in and learn, you can decode those messages early and shift the trajectory.

Don't wait for the scream. Learn to listen for the whisper.