

## River Cities Interventional Pain Specialists

Since 2004 Dr. Randall P. Brewer has been in clinical private practice in Shreveport, Louisiana and maintains academic appointments at Duke University and Louisiana State University, where he routinely lectures in the areas of Pain Medicine and clinical Neuroscience in the Department of Neurology and the Medical school. He is board certified by the American Society of Anesthesiologists, the American Board of Pain Medicine, and the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Dr. Brewer and his multi-disciplinary team of highly skilled nurses and physician extenders provide comprehensive pain management treatment solutions to treat chronic pain disorders. The team works collaboratively with patients and area providers to develop individualized treatment plans and attainable goals. . These strategies help patients to effectively address a wide range of chronic pain disorders.

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## TOP TEN QUESTIONS ABOUT...



## CHRONIC LOW BACK PAIN

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### 1. What is chronic low back pain?

Low back pain is said to be “chronic” when it has been present for greater than three months. Chronic low back pain is present almost daily and usually affects daily activities.

### 2. How common is chronic low back pain?

Research shows that most people (at least 80%) will experience low back pain at some point in their lifetime. Only a small minority of people develop chronic low back pain. Approximately 31 million people will have back pain at a given time. Back pain is one of the most common reasons for people to see a doctor!

### 3. What causes chronic low back pain?

This question has puzzled researchers for many decades. Some people develop muscle strains, ligament injuries, and disc ruptures during strenuous activities, while other people may develop a back injury while doing every day activities. For people that seek regular care for chronic low back pain, it is believed that arthritis and degenerative disc disease account for the majority of cases of chronic low back pain.

### 4. My back is sore a lot and three or four times a year it just “goes out,” is this considered chronic low back pain?

Different forms of chronic low back pain exist. Since the back is always supporting your body and movement occurs during most all of the time you are awake, most people with chronic low back pain have wide fluctuations in their pain. Many people with chronic low back pain will have “acute low back pain” episodes that occur.

### 5. What causes these flare-ups? What should I do during a flare-up?

The cause of these flare-ups is not always known. Pre-existing arthritic conditions can become inflamed and increase pain. Joint sprains and muscle strains are common after certain activities, such as heavy yard work and housework, and recreational activities. If your flare-up lasts longer than three to five days and impairs your ability to participate in your normal routines, you should speak with your physician..

### 6. What kind of treatments will my physician prescribe for a flare-up?

Most flare-ups are treated conservatively. This treatment may consist of local measures such as ice for inflammation, and mild heat for muscle spasms. Analgesic and/or muscle relaxant medications may be necessary for a short period of time. Anti-inflammatory medications can be helpful if your condition is due to inflammation. For refractory flare-ups, your doctor may suggest an injection or referral for specialized care.

### 7. What type of injections are done for flareups?

Flare-ups are often treated with selective nerve blocks or epidural steroids when the back pain goes down the leg and is believed to be due to inflammation. Back pain that does not go down the legs may be treated with local muscle, ligament, or joint injections depending upon the assessment of your physician.

### 8. There are so many treatments advertised for chronic back pain. Which one is the best?

It is important to know that many treatments for low back pain exist because back pain is very common and can be difficult to “cure.” Like many chronic conditions, low back pain is most often “managed” rather than cured. Research has not yet discovered the most effective treatment for low back pain. Most specialists in the field recommend a “multidisciplinary” approach to the management of chronic low back pain.

### 9. What is a multidisciplinary approach? Does this mean I will need to see many different providers?

A multidisciplinary approach simply

means that your physician will be utilizing more than one type of treatment for your back pain. Combinations of therapies, tailored to your specific diagnosis and history, will determine which one is best for you. Usually, a combination of physical treatments (exercises, physical therapy), medications (anti-inflammatory, muscle relaxants, pain medications), lifestyle modifications (job environment, smoking, obesity) and behavioral treatments (counseling, biofeedback, education) is the most effective.

### 10. I just got over an episode of acute low back pain. How can I prevent chronic low back pain?

Pain specialists generally recommend that you undergo a thorough evaluation to determine the cause of your episode, particularly if it was severe. Most physicians recommend the maintenance of an ideal body weight, discontinuation of smoking or nicotine use, regular exercise, and proper body mechanics to decrease your chances of having another episode of acute low back pain. These measures may not prevent the pain from ever returning, but they should lower the number of flareups you have and allow you to recover from these much faster.

