

# Managing **BACK PAIN**

**Bonus Home Remedies**



Lakota Natural Pain Relief Series

# Protect and heal your back

Backaches are second only to headaches as a source of pain. With the spine's complex structure of bones, discs, nerves, ligaments and muscles, it's no wonder. Even so, there's a lot we can do to keep our backs healthy and pain-free. In these pages you'll find out about different types of back pain, which activities cause the most stress, how to minimize symptoms and therapies that can help.



# REDUCING THE STRAIN ON YOUR BACK

*Back pain is usually the result of lifestyle, aging or accident. Of these three factors, lifestyle plays a central role in how well you age and in your chances of accidental injury. Good lifestyle habits—correct posture, good lifting techniques and plenty of exercise for a strong, flexible back—will keep your risk of back pain to a minimum.*

The single most important way to look after your back is to respect the natural curves of your spine. Any habitual pose that changes your back's regular curves—from an awkward sleeping position to poor driving posture—can increase the pressure on your spine.

Good posture means holding your body in its correct alignment. While it is important not to slouch, you should also be careful not to overcompensate. Holding your back too straight puts your spine under almost as much pressure as when it is too arched. Poor posture can quickly become a habit; over time, the muscles and ligaments in your back begin to lengthen or shorten, making your posture feel natural.

## SLEEPING SOUNDLY

Although the weight of your upper body on your spine is considerably reduced when you're lying down, it is easy to adopt an awkward position without realizing it when you're falling asleep. In particular, try to avoid lying on your stomach with your neck twisted to one side and try not to stay in one position for too long.

Most people spend six to eight hours a day in bed, so it is well worthwhile making sure that your mattress and pillow give you the best possible support: **BIGGER IS BETTER.** A spacious bed may stop you adopting a cramped position.

### ■■■ SIX WAYS TO A STRONG BACK

The key to maintaining a healthy back is to be aware not only of your posture, but also of the everyday movements that place your spine and back muscles under unnecessary pressure.

1. Assess your posture regularly, both sitting and standing—it's easy to pick up bad habits without noticing. Take a good look at yourself whenever you pass a mirror.
2. Change your position regularly. If you have to stay in one position for an extended period of time—in a car or at a desk, for example—try to take a break every 20 minutes or so to move around and stretch.
3. Avoid wearing high heels for long periods. High heels accentuate the normal curve of your back and tip your pelvis, which can contribute to knee and back problems.
4. Use both shoulders when you are wearing a backpack. If you carry a heavy bag, briefcase or a suitcase, alternate the arm that you use to carry it.
5. Watch your wallet when you are sitting down. A bulging wallet in your back pocket can place pressure on the sciatic nerve.
6. Don't snooze in front of the TV; an armchair or sofa won't take pressure off your lower spine. Snoozing prevents you from shifting when your back starts to feel uncomfortable.



**TRY OUT A RANGE OF BEDS.** Lie on a bed for a few minutes and turn over a few times before making a decision. Especially if you're going to invest in a high-quality bed, you want one that guarantees comfort.

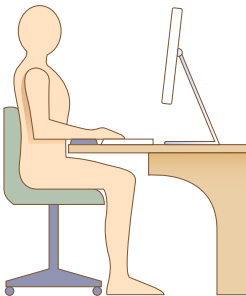
**CHOOSE A GOOD MATTRESS.** Look for a moderately firm mattress: not too hard, not too soft. Choose one that yields enough to adapt to your contours, but is not so soft that you sink into it; your spine should maintain its natural curves. Remember to flip and rotate your mattress regularly, once every two to three months.

**CHOOSE A GOOD PILLOW.** Your pillow should support your neck in alignment with the rest of your spine. An overstuffed pillow or too many pillows may push your head too far forward; a pillow that's too limp or flimsy may tip your head back.

## GOOD POSTURE AT YOUR DESK

Poor sitting posture is a major cause of lower back problems. Sitting places much greater pressure on your spine than standing or walking. Even when you sit upright, the weight of your upper body exerts around 50 percent more pressure on your lower spine than when standing. If you sit slouched over, the pressure on your spine rises to 150 percent greater than when standing.

Good posture is particularly important if you have to spend long periods at a desk or computer. Try to get up and walk around every 20 minutes. Do neck stretches, shoulder rolls, shrugs, arms stretches, neck rolls and back stretches to loosen up your spine [see pages 82-83]. Assume other sitting positions for short periods, but try to spend most of your time in the optimal position.



## GOOD POSTURE IN YOUR CAR

One UK study showed that people who drive more than 40,000 km a year take an average of 22 days a year off work with a bad back. Don't do the "banana": bring your seat forward enough so that you're not stretching to reach for the pedals and your back is fairly straight; keep your arms comfortably bent.

### ■■■ HOW TO SIT AT YOUR DESK

**Eyes** Make sure that the screen is positioned so that your eyes are level with the top of the screen.

**Body** Do not slouch. Keep your pelvis tucked in and make sure that your lower back is fully supported by your chair. Position the monitor and keyboard so that you don't need to twist your hips or neck.

**Arms and wrists** Have your work surface just lower than your bent elbows; your wrists should be level with your hands while typing. Use a wrist pad if necessary.

**Legs and feet** Set the seat height so that your legs are bent at right angles and your feet are flat on the floor or on a foot rest. Your legs should fit underneath the work surface so that you don't have to lean forward.

# COMMON BACK PROBLEMS

*According to a 2003 study, nearly two-thirds of Canadians suffer from some form of back pain. Doctors have a good understanding of the mechanisms that cause back problems, but it is often difficult to identify the exact source of the pain.*

Many episodes of back pain are trivial, if unpleasant, and tend to resolve without treatment or the need for further investigation. Nonetheless, back pain may at times be a sign of something more serious. The sooner you figure out the problem, the easier it will be to beat it; so if you're experiencing back pain, it is important to be aware of how different conditions can affect your back.

## ■■■ CHIROPRACTOR OR OSTEOPATH?

Chiropractors and osteopaths physically manipulate joints and tissues to relieve a wide range of musculoskeletal conditions. The two therapies take very similar approaches, although chiropractors tend to focus more closely on the spine. Osteopathy and chiropractic are complementary therapies; many conventional medical professionals recognize them as an effective way to treat many back problems. Therapists should not treat certain conditions, such as severe osteoporosis. The practice of osteopathy in Canada is somewhat restricted. Because of this, finding a practitioner can be more difficult.

A session with a chiropractor or osteopath normally lasts around 20–30 minutes. The number of sessions that you will need varies considerably depending on your problem, but two to 10 sessions is normal, initially every week or so. Chiropractic services are partially covered by some provincial medicare plans, and some private insurance plans cover both types of therapy. If you feel you could benefit from visiting a chiropractor or osteopath, your doctor may be willing to refer you to a suitable practitioner. For more information contact the Canadian Chiropractic Association ([www.ccachiro.org](http://www.ccachiro.org)) or the Canadian Osteopathic Association ([www.osteopathic.ca](http://www.osteopathic.ca)).

**Initial consultation** At your first consultation the osteopath or chiropractor will examine you to diagnose any problems and may use X-rays or other tests. An osteopath may also use touch (palpation) to identify points of weakness and problem areas and will check overall postural balance. The osteopath may ask you to remove some clothes and perform a series of movements.

**Manipulation** Osteopaths and chiropractors use many of the same techniques. A chiropractor will tend to focus on your back and place more emphasis on freeing up and mobilizing the spinal column. An osteopath will tend to manipulate limbs, joints and soft tissues all over your body. Neither treatment should be painful, although some people experience minor side effects such as muscle soreness.

**Aftercare** After manipulating or massaging your back, the osteopath or chiropractor may show you how to achieve better posture and give you advice on changing any aspects of your life that are making your problem worse. They may also teach you some simple exercises that you can do at home to relieve pain and stop problems from recurring.



## SPRAINS AND STRAINS

The most frequent cause of back pain is a small injury to the soft tissues in your back, such as a muscle or tendon strain or a ligament sprain. Most strains and sprains occur during day-to-day activities such as lifting or twisting; any excessive physical demand on your back can over-stretch your tissues. Even snoozing in an armchair can place your muscles and ligaments under uneven pressure and may result in minor damage. Your lower back, in particular, is susceptible to muscular strains because it forms the pivot around which you move your upper body.

Most strains and sprains improve within a few weeks, but you may find that heat treatments, such as heat packs and baths, help to relieve discomfort.



## JOINT PROBLEMS

The complexity of your spine makes it particularly vulnerable to structural problems. Each of the 26 bones that make up your spine (the remainder of your vertebrae are fused) is connected to its neighbour by three separate joints. This means that there are multiple points of wear and friction within your back.

The following conditions are problems related to joints:

### SPINAL ARTHRITIS (ANKYLOSING SPONDYLITIS)

#### Symptoms

- Chronic back pain, especially in the lower back
- Morning back stiffness
- As disease progresses, increasing spinal rigidity and a stooped posture

#### What You Can Do

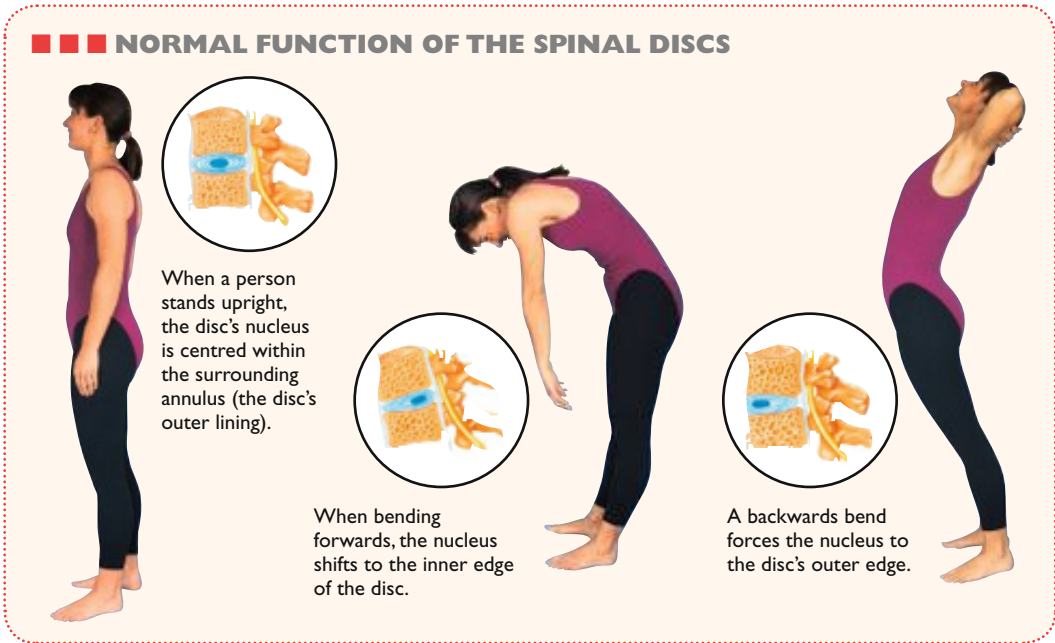
To ease morning stiffness and pain, take a hot shower and then do gentle back stretches.

To keep stooped posture at bay, do not slouch, and strive to maintain good posture at all times. When sitting, make sure that your chair provides good back support. In a car, adjust the headrest to provide maximum support. Tucking a pillow behind the small of your back may help relieve lower-back pain. Try to sleep flat on your back on a firm mattress and without a pillow, or sleep on your stomach with a thin pillow. The point is to sleep stretched out rather than curled into a fetal position.

### HERNIATED DISC

#### Common Symptoms

- Back pain, usually in the lower back (lumbar)—less commonly in the neck (cervical) part of the spine—that can range from a dull ache to severe, burning or shooting pains
- Back pain that is worsened by movement, especially bending, lifting, straining, coughing, or sneezing



- Numbness or tingling sensations that may run from the back to the buttocks and down a leg, or from the shoulder and down an arm
- Leg weakness as well as difficulty lifting a foot when walking
- Loss of nerve reflexes, such as a knee or ankle jerk

### What You Can Do

A heating pad often provides relief for mild back or neck pain. Soak in a hot tub or warm whirlpool bath, if available. Sleep on a firm but not hard mattress. Properly placed pillows can ease stress on the back: a pillow under the knees for those who sleep on their backs, or one under the waist and another under the shoulder for side sleepers. Until the pain subsides, be sure to avoid lifting heavy objects, straining and bending.

Gentle stretching exercises often help. However, exercises should not be undertaken without consulting a doctor. In severe cases, a few days of bed rest may be necessary. Most experts recommend that this be limited to two or three days; longer periods of total bed rest can make matters worse by causing muscle weakness.

Maintaining physical fitness and good posture is the mainstay of prevention. When sitting—the most stressful position for the lower back—make sure the chair or car seat provides good back support. Get up frequently to stretch the back and relieve muscle tension.

### LOW-BACK PAIN

Low-back pain is a very common condition: eight out of 10 Canadians will experience an episode of back pain at some point. The problem is likely to become chronic with increasing age; about half of all people over age 60 have chronic back problems.

### Common Symptoms

- Acute or chronic pain in the lower back
- Diffuse pain or pain associated with specific tender points

“ I work in a long-term care facility. My job is physically demanding. I try not to take pain medication because I feel it is not healthy for my other organs. The last day-shift I worked, the pain was unbearable (and believe me—I went through child-bearing!) About 10 minutes after applying Lakota to my shoulder blades and lower back, the pain was quite a bit better. I was comfortable enough to get a good night’s sleep. Thanks, Lakota! ”

Deb Haremink, Kindersley, SK

### What You Can Do

If the pain is very severe, try a day or two of bed rest. Lie on your back or side on a firm surface, with your knees bent and supported by a pillow, even if you are more comfortable on your stomach. Use a heating pad, ice pack or alternating applications of warmth and cold for extra relief.

When the pain subsides, start exercises to strengthen your back. If the exercises hurt, however, stop immediately; pain is a warning that something is wrong.

### How to Treat It

If symptoms persist after two weeks of self-treatment, or if they are recurring, see a doctor. Don’t delay if the pain is accompanied by other symptoms, such as numbness in your legs or loss of bowel or bladder control.

Your doctor will examine your back, test your nerve reflexes and probably order X-rays. You may also have imaging studies such as CT scans or an MRI, bone density tests, and nerve and muscle evaluations.



### OSTEOPOROSIS

Osteoporosis is a disease in which bones lose calcium and other minerals that give them their density and strength. We build bone mass until about age 30; after that, bones slowly lose minerals. It is estimated that more than 2 million Canadians suffer from osteoporosis. The condition is most common among post-menopausal women. Men are also vulnerable to osteoporosis, although they develop it at least 10 years after women do. Other risk factors include: smoking, a sedentary lifestyle, excessive alcohol consumption, long-term use of steroid medications, high blood pressure and a diet that lacks adequate calcium and vitamin D.



“ I suffer from chronic pain caused by a neck injury. Other than painkillers, which really don't help that much, I have constant pain in the back of my head, in the neck area. I find that Lakota is the only topical product that gives me relief. I usually apply it twice a day and whenever the pain is very bad. My wife also uses Lakota for her chronic back pain. I have recommended Lakota to many of my friends. ”

Ted Mate, Edmonton, AB

### Common Symptoms

- Mild back pain that worsens as vertebrae become increasingly compressed
- Height loss and development of a dowager's hump
- Painful bone fractures, particularly of the wrist and hip
- Sudden, severe back pain with little or no provocation

### What You Can Do

A heating pad can help ease the mild back pain of osteoporosis. Daily exercise is also important, not only to maintain bone density but also to reduce pain. Bone-building and maintenance require a certain amount of stress in the form of weight-bearing exercise—walking for at least 30 minutes a day is ideal. Jogging, dancing, aerobics, stair-climbing, and racquet sports also provide weight-bearing exercise.

#### ■■■ EXERCISES TO EASE LOW-BACK PAIN

##### CAT AND CAMEL

Start on all fours. First lower your back while squeezing and lifting your buttocks, (near right) much in the way a cat stretches. Then arch your back to make a camel's hump (below). Hold each position for a count of five, and repeat five to 10 times.



##### MODIFIED LEG RAISES

Lie on your back with knees bent and arms comfortably stretched along your sides. Slowly bring your knees towards your chest while keeping your head and upper back flat on the floor (above).

Remember, too, that aerobic exercise leads to increased endorphins: natural painkillers and mood enhancers. Strength training—using free weights, rubber tubing, or resistance machines—builds muscles, strengthens bones and improves balance, an important factor in preventing falls.

Make sure that your diet provides adequate calcium, vitamins and minerals.

## NEURAL PROBLEMS

Because your nerves travel through your spine on their way to your brain, pain that originates in another part of your body can sometimes feel as though it comes from your back. This is known as referred pain. Conditions that can produce referred back pain include ulcers, kidney disease, ovarian cysts and pancreatitis.

This can also work the other way. Damage to the nerves in or around your spine may cause pain that seems to radiate out to other areas. Conditions that cause or result from nerve damage include the following:

## SPINAL STENOSIS

### Common Symptoms

- Chronic dull backache
- Occasional numbness, burning or sharp pain in the back, buttocks, or legs
- Sensation of leg heaviness or weakness when walking

### What You Can Do

Try to lose excess weight and, if you have a tendency to slouch, make an effort to improve your posture. A heating pad or alternating hot and cold packs, gentle stretching and moderate, low-impact exercise—walking, swimming, cycling—may help, but check with a doctor or physiotherapist before embarking on an exercise program if you suffer from chronic back pain.



“ My boyfriend often gets extremely bad back pain from an injury he obtained at work. Some days he isn't even able to get up. One day he fell in the shower because his back seized up. We ran out to the store to get him something to relieve his pain, since his pain medication only does so much for him. We were referred to Lakota, and wow, what a difference! He is like a new man! His back feels so much better, and we are able to enjoy the small things in life again, like taking our children to the park and walking along the beach. Thanks Lakota!! You have saved our lives! ”

Cassie Ladouceur, Orillia, ON

## SCIATICA

### Common Symptoms

- Mild to severe pain in the lower back that may extend down a leg
- Burning or shooting leg pain worsened by coughing, sneezing, or bending
- Muscle weakness in the buttock, thigh, lower leg, or foot
- Numbness and tingling in the lower leg; loss of knee nerve reflexes

### What You Can Do

A day or two of bed rest may ease pressure on the nerve and promote healing. A heating pad or soaking in a hot bath can also ease pain and relax muscle spasms, which worsen sciatica. Consult a doctor if the pain persists for more than a week.



### CAUTION

This information can add to your knowledge, but be sure to see a doctor—or more than one—if you're experiencing pain. Self-diagnosis is a risky gamble.

### How to Treat It

A doctor will test nerve reflexes in the knee and ankle and order X-rays and perhaps CT scans or an MRI to determine the source and extent of the problem. If the nerve is not seriously compressed, non-surgical treatments will be tried first. Surgery may be necessary if the nerve is compressed or if other therapies fail to relieve the pain.

## ABNORMAL SPINAL CURVES/POSTURE DEFECTS

### Common Symptoms

Posture defects are a common cause of chronic back pain, especially among older people. Other symptoms include:

- Kyphosis: Rounded shoulders, a hunched back, head thrust forward
- Lordosis: Arched lower back, protruding abdomen and buttocks, possible ruptured spinal disks

### How They Develop

Posture defects, especially kyphosis, often develop in childhood or during adolescence; they are also common among older persons who have osteoporosis or

spinal arthritis. Mild posture defects usually do not cause pain and other uncomfortable symptoms. But as the abnormal posture becomes more pronounced, it can cause a chronic backache, ruptured discs, sciatica, and other nerve problems. Extreme kyphosis can compress the rib cage and cause breathing problems.

## What You Can Do

A heating pad can help ease back pain. Stretching and exercises to strengthen the abdominal muscles, such as pelvic lifts, straight-leg raises and modified sit-ups, can improve posture and relieve back pain. Sleep on a firm mattress, preferably on your back or side. If you spend a lot of time sitting, make sure that your chair provides good back support. Wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes and avoid high heels, especially if you have lordosis.

## How to Treat Them

A doctor will first determine whether the posture defect is caused by spinal arthritis, osteoporosis or another underlying disease; if so, treating it may not only relieve back pain but also correct the problem. A back brace, physical therapy and other non-surgical approaches may be recommended. In very severe cases, surgery may be necessary to realign the spine.

## SCOLIOSIS

Scoliosis is an exaggerated sideways curvature of the spine.

## Common Symptoms

- Back looks crooked, especially when bending over; frequent backaches
- Uneven shoulders, legs, or hips; rounded shoulder, swayback, and other postural abnormalities; a shoulder blade (scapula) that sticks out
- Sunken chest, possible breathing or heart problems

## What You Can Do

Mild scoliosis—defined as a spinal curvature of 10 to 20 degrees—usually does not cause problems. A more pronounced curvature of more than 25 degrees may result in uneven shoulders or hips and a visibly crooked back. Moderate to severe scoliosis can cause posture defects and frequent backaches; if the chest cavity is deformed, serious breathing and heart problems may develop.

## PERFECT POSTURE

### HEAD AND NECK

The crown of your head, not your forehead, should be the highest point of your body. Keep your head and chin neutral: neither jutting out nor tucked too far in.

### UPPER BACK

Lift your chest and keep your shoulders down and back, but not so far that your pose feels forced or unnatural.

### UPPER BACK

Pull your stomach and your buttocks muscles tight. Try not to overarch or round your lower back.

### LEGS

Keep your knees slightly bent and your toes pointing forwards. If you need to stand for long periods, rest one foot on a step to relieve pressure on your lower back and change feet every five to 15 minutes.





## MINIMIZING THE SYMPTOMS OF BACK PROBLEMS

Most episodes of back pain resolve over time, but problems often recur in the long term. This may be because the immediate cause of the pain—a muscle spasm, sprain or strain, for example—is merely a symptom of a wider problem, such as muscle weakness or postural misalignment. For this reason it is important not to ignore recurring back pain.

### What Studies Show

Back pain isn't a life sentence. Ninety percent of people with lower back pain get better within two months, even if they don't do a thing about it.

### Rest and Activity

Doctors used to recommend bed rest for almost any back problem, and there is no doubt that rest is important. Lying down reduces pressure on your spine and prevents friction between inflamed bones and discs. However, doctors now understand that extended periods of bed rest can actually slow recovery and increase the risk of problems recurring. Complete rest may be recommended during the acute phase (the first day or so after an injury) or during painful flare-ups of chronic conditions. But as a general rule, it is vital to get mobile again as quickly as possible.

Light activity encourages circulation (which aids healing), improves flexibility and maintains strong muscles around your spine. A number of studies have found that people with back pain who return to normal activities quickly feel healthier, take fewer painkillers and are less distressed than those who limit their activities for longer periods of time.

### Back Supports

You should never wear back or neck braces for extended periods unless specifically advised to do so by your doctor or specialist. Long-term use of such supports stops you from using your muscles and they will quickly start to atrophy, placing you at much greater risk of further injury.

### Sports and Activities

Although exercise is a great way to relieve a painful back, certain activities do have potential risks. Sports that involve constant impact, such as jogging, can aggravate low-back pain and contact sports, such as football, can be dangerous if you have neck problems. Cycling can easily jar your back, particularly when riding over rough terrain, if your seat is set at the wrong angle or if your bike is the wrong size. On the other hand, certain activities bring real benefits. Good sports for bad backs include:

- Swimming and other water-based activities, such as water aerobics, are useful because water counteracts some of the effects of gravity, reducing compression in your lower spine. The backstroke is particularly beneficial, as it opens up the chest and shoulders.





“Wrangling horses (or just one pony) every day can lead to some very sore, tired muscles. After a long gallop, or a bucking bronco, nothing relieves an ache quite like Lakota and trust me, I’ve tried. Bad ponies, rambunctious horses all bow down to the superior healing power of Lakota. After a treatment with Lakota, I’m ready to get back on the horse again and ride triumphantly into the range! Lakota was made for cowgirls like me.”

Naomi Lindstein, Ottawa, ON

- Walking is low-impact. It helps to strengthen your back and stomach muscles without causing too much strain.
- Exercise balls can help you to target your core muscles. The ball places you in an unstable position, so you automatically engage the muscles in your abdomen, back and pelvic-girdle region—the core muscles that support your lower back and spine.
- Tai chi and yoga are both enjoyable ways to improve mobility, flexibility and muscle tone. The deliberate, flowing movements of tai chi and the controlled stretching required by yoga poses encourage good postural awareness without straining or jarring your back. [For information on yoga breathing, see page 100.]

## Physical Therapy

Many of the most common causes of back pain, such as muscle spasm, muscular tension, misaligned vertebrae and some postural problems, respond well to physical manipulation. Common types of physical therapy for problem backs include:

- **Massage:** improves circulation, aids muscle recovery and reduces tension. If you opt for a professional massage, make sure you choose a fully qualified masseur.
- **Physiotherapy:** involves a range of physical and manipulative techniques that improve movement, strength and flexibility. Treatment should also address underlying factors that contribute to the physical problems.
- **Osteopathy and chiropractic therapy:** specialized manipulative therapies that focus on combating structural misalignments in the musculoskeletal system [see page 70 for more information.]

## Back Surgery

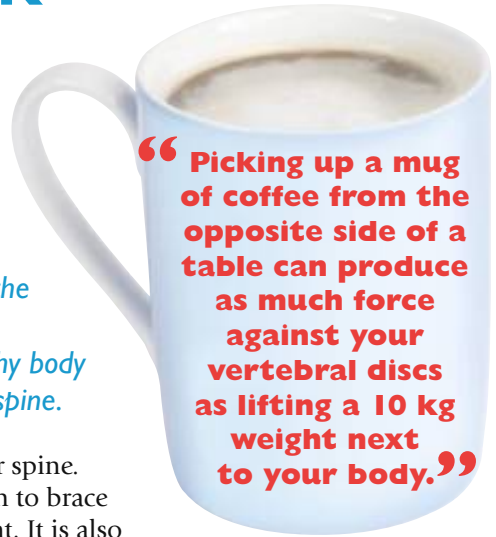
Surgery remains a treatment of last resort for back problems. It is unlikely to be used unless other treatments have failed and, even then, the majority of back conditions are not suitable for surgery. Conditions that may benefit from surgery include pinched or compressed nerves and vertebral deformities or fractures.



# EXERCISE AND YOUR BACK

*Doctors no longer recommend bed rest for back pain; the muscles, ligaments and joints in your back, like any other area of your body, need regular exercise to stay healthy. Without movement, the intervertebral discs start to dry up and shrink, your ligaments begin to lose their elasticity and the muscles around your spine grow weaker. Exercise also helps you to maintain a healthy body weight, which reduces extra strain on your spine.*

You need strong back muscles to protect your spine. Weak muscles do not contain enough tension to brace your spine and absorb the stress of movement. It is also important to keep muscles on opposing sides of your body balanced: Having weak abdominals and strong lower back muscles is a common cause of lower back pain.



## ■■■ LIFTING OBJECTS SAFELY

You can reduce your risk of injury by making sure that you use the correct technique. Test the weight of the object before you lift it and, if it's not too heavy, follow the guidelines below:

**1.** Stand with your feet hip-width apart and as close to the object as possible. Place one foot slightly in front of the other. Bend your knees and squat down, keeping a straight back and tight stomach.



**2.** Hold the object close to your body as you stand up. Keep your back straight and use your legs and not your back to provide the power.



**3.** Be careful not to twist or turn your body until you are standing up straight.



“ I’ve struggled with back pain for a very long time. Nothing seemed to work for me. I even bought a very expensive mattress and that did nothing. I kept hearing about Lakota and thought, “What do I have to lose?” Well, I gave Lakota Roll-on a try and to my surprise, after using it every day for two weeks, my back pain was gone. I’ve been using Lakota for six months now and I have no more back pain. The only time I use it now is if I feel any pain in my back, which is not too often. ”

Diane Belanger, Greenfield, NB

Physical activity isn’t risk-free, but that the benefits far outweigh the dangers. To avoid potential problems, such as strained or torn ligaments, it is vital to warm up thoroughly before exercise. Always exercise within your limits, avoid sudden twisting movements of your trunk and stop immediately if anything hurts. For a program of simple exercises to increase the strength and flexibility in your neck, back and shoulders [see pages 82-87].

## LIFTING AND PUSHING

Poor lifting technique is the single most common cause of acute back pain. It can also cause longer-term back problems, because it exacerbates any existing weakness. Manual workers and people whose job involves a lot of lifting are most at risk; hundreds of thousands of nurses injure their backs each year, often as a result of lifting patients. You can reduce your risk of injury by using the correct lifting techniques [see box, opposite page].

Even the best technique won’t remove the risk altogether, however, so test the weight of the object before you pick it up: If you find that you’re straining you may need to get someone to give you a hand. If you have to lift an object higher than your shoulders, use a stable step stool or ladder to avoid over-reaching.

Pushing and pulling heavy objects can also contribute to back problems, sprains and strains. Given the choice, always push a heavy object rather than pulling it—this puts less pressure on your lower back. Bend your knees and use your legs rather than your back for power, and be alert for sudden changes in resistance.

## Everyday Strategies

Incorporate ways to prevent stressed muscles in your everyday life. Avoiding stressed muscles in the first place is even better than treating them later.

- ✓ Be like a cat and stretch often. Your body wants to stretch and often does so unconsciously. Stretching loosens muscles, helps your blood flow, relieves your bones and joints and refreshes your spirit.
- ✓ Glory in hot water; it soothes and supports the joints. Heat brings blood to your joints, muscles and skin, flushing you with nutrients. And the calmness of a soak in a tub is an unbeatable way to relax.
- ✓ A good massage is one of life’s greatest pleasures—if you haven’t experienced one, don’t wait any longer. It’s worth the money, and the muscle and joint relief will be substantial.

## Exercises for Your Neck

Your cervical spine (the portion of your spine in your neck) supports the weight of your head and protects the nerves that travel from your head to the rest of your body. The average human head weighs 10 to 15 pounds—about the same weight as a small bowling ball—so the vertebrae in your neck are under considerable pressure, even when you're standing still. Your head is also positioned slightly forward over your spine rather than directly above, which means that your neck muscles have to work continuously to balance the weight of your head.

The muscles and joints in your neck control the nodding and rotation movements of your head and let you bend and twist your neck. Holding your head in an awkward position for any length of time can cause muscle tension and compress your neck vertebrae, which may have a secondary effect throughout your back and spine, causing pain and discomfort.

With regular practice, the simple exercises shown here will help you to maintain neck strength and mobility. If you have any existing problems, the exercises may also help you to regain loss of motion in the neck region and control pain.

Perform each movement slowly for five repetitions, resting a short time in between each set of movements.

If any of these exercises makes you feel uncomfortable or dizzy, slow down, reduce the extent of the stretch or skip the stretch altogether.

### HEAD ROTATION

Rotate your head to one side until you can't turn it any further. Bring your head back to the centre point, rest a moment, then turn your head to the opposite side.



### NECK FLEX/EXTENSION

Bend your head forwards until your chin touches your chest and your eyes look straight down at the floor. Bring your head back up, rest a moment, then bend it back until your eyes look directly at the ceiling.



### NECK RETRACTION

Draw your head back and bring your chin down slightly. This exercise counteracts the natural tendency to poke your head too far forwards.



### SIDE FLEX/EXTENSION

Keep your head facing forwards and move your ear down towards your shoulder until you feel a stretch along the opposite side of your neck. Bring your head back to the centre, rest a moment, then move your head over to the opposite side.



## Exercises for Your Upper Back and Shoulders

Your thoracic spine, in your upper back, does not have such a wide range of motion as your neck or lower back, so injuries are relatively rare. However, irritation or excess tension in your back and shoulder muscles can be very painful. In particular, poor posture and hunched shoulders—common among people who sit at a desk all day—can tighten your chest muscles and overstretch the muscles in your upper back. This may compress the vertebrae in your spine and lead to areas of painful, knotted muscles and tension headaches.

The exercises below are intended to strengthen the muscles around your upper back and shoulders, open your chest and reduce tension in the muscles and ligaments. Try each movement slowly for five repetitions, resting a short time in between each set of movements.

### SHOULDER BRACE

Stand with your arms relaxed by your sides. Bring your shoulders as far forward as possible and then bring them right back, pulling your shoulder blades together.



### THORACIC STRETCH

**1.** Stand with your feet about shoulder-width apart and your knees slightly bent. Bend over from the waist and hold onto a stable support, such a chair back. Push your bottom backwards until you can feel a stretch along your upper back. Hold for a count of 15 before standing back up.

**2.** Sit on a chair with your feet flat on the ground. Gradually roll your upper body forwards from the waist. Reach your hands between your legs to grip the legs of the chair. Slowly curl back up.



### SHOULDER SHRUG

Stand with your arms relaxed by your sides. Lift your shoulders to your ears and squeeze your shoulder blades together. Then rotate your shoulders to the back and down. Never rotate your shoulders forwards.



## Exercises for Your Lower Back

The lumbar region in your lower back is the most frequently injured area of the spine. This is mainly because your lower back carries the full weight of your torso and allows for a much greater range of movement than your upper back. The majority of episodes of low-back pain (lumbago) are caused by muscle strain; back muscles—like other muscles—need exercise to maintain strength and tone.

Exercises to prevent and treat low-back pain usually focus on strengthening the spine flexors (erector spinae and gluteal muscles), spine extensors (abdominals) and the muscles along the sides of your torso (oblique abdominals). Another important group of muscles are your hamstrings, the large muscles in the back of your thighs. Tight hamstrings limit the motion in your pelvis, which can cause low-back pain.

With regular practice, the exercises shown here will help you to maintain the strength and flexibility of the muscles in your lower back. Do not strain or force the movements, and stop if you feel any discomfort. Try each movement slowly for five repetitions, resting a short time in between each set of movements.

### FORWARD BEND

Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Without bouncing, slowly reach one hand down towards the opposite foot. Let your other arm swing up behind your body. Return to a standing position. Don't worry if you can't reach your toes—your flexibility should improve with practice.

### KNEE ROLL

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the ground. Keep your knees together. Roll your knees slowly from side to side.



**PELVIC TILT**

Lie on your back with your knees bent and hip-width apart and your feet flat on the ground. Press your lower back down to the floor; then arch your lower back up off the floor. Let your tail bone tip down to the mat; do not lift your buttocks.



**ABDOMINAL CURL**

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Cross your hands over your chest and pull in your stomach muscles. Slowly curl your shoulders and upper back up off the floor. Try to keep your lower back in contact with the floor.



**BACK EXTENDER**

Lie on your stomach with your hands laced underneath your forehead. Use your lower back muscles to slowly lift your head and shoulders about 20 cm off the floor. Be careful not to strain your neck.



## **Exercises for Your Upper Back and Shoulders.**

Your thoracic spine, in your upper back, does not have such a wide range of motion as your neck or lower back, so injuries are relatively rare. However, irritation or excess tension in your upper back and shoulder muscles can be very painful. In particular, poor posture and hunched shoulders—common among people who sit at a desk all day—can tighten your chest muscles and overstretch the muscles in your upper back. This may compress the vertebrae in your spine and lead to areas of painful, knotted muscles and tension headaches.

There are various exercises that may help with upper back and shoulder pain. The shoulder shrug: lift your shoulders to your ears and squeeze your shoulder blades together; then rotate your shoulders to the back and down.

Or try this Pilates-inspired back and neck extender exercise.

### **WHY PILATES**

You've probably been hearing about Pilates, a system of slow, controlled exercises intended to strengthen your body's core stabilizing muscles while improving their natural flexibility.

The emphasis of Pilates remains squarely on good posture and body awareness—which makes it perfect for musculoskeletal fitness. The benefits are many—hence its current popularity;

- ✓ Improves flexibility
- ✓ Improves body awareness
- ✓ Aids posture
- ✓ Tones muscles, particularly the core stabilizing muscles
- ✓ Increases range of motion
- ✓ Low impact

“As a graphic designer, I spend WAY too much time at the computer. I started having awful back pain, and pain meds would barely take the edge off. A friend of mine recommended Lakota. I was skeptical, but I had nothing to lose. I picked up some Lakota, and WOW! Within 20 minutes of having taken it I felt like a new person! I actually went and sat at my home computer...I was shocked that I could sit and not be in pain. Lakota has been my lifesaver!”

Diane Dunbrack, Bowmanville, ON

This exercise lengthens the muscles that run along the length of your spine, opening up your back. It also relieves tension in your neck. Controlled breathing helps you to focus and relax.

### BACK AND NECK EXTENDER

**1.** Lie on your back and gently cradle your knees in your hands. Hold your knees slightly apart and in line with your hips and press your lower back flat against the floor. Pull your stomach in towards your spine and keep your abdominals tight.

**2.** Inhale. Then, as you exhale, gently draw your knees in towards your chest. Make sure your arms are not straining and your elbows are open and relaxed. Keep your spine flat against the floor. You should feel your chest and back begin to open out.

**3.** Inhale. As you exhale, slowly draw your right leg in towards your chest a little further. Inhale and release your leg, allowing it to return to the starting position. As you exhale again, slowly draw your left leg further in towards your chest. Repeat this sequence, coordinating it with your breathing, for a total of 10 times.



# HOME REMEDIES

*You don't have to run to the doctor for every bruise, backache, cut or cold. Chances are the solution you need is right at hand. Some of these tips are far from new, but that doesn't mean they're not valuable today.*

## JOINT PAIN

When I get pain in my finger joints I rub them vigorously for a few minutes, apply some ice and then slowly squeeze a tennis ball several times to loosen the joints. I also repeatedly squeeze a tennis ball several times a day in order to strengthen my wrists and fingers. I find that my grip and finger pain is relieved by this exercise.

*Wilfred Kotzer, Toronto, ON*

For joint pain, I make fruit smoothies every morning for breakfast. I mix in ginger, cinnamon, black poppy seeds, flax, hemp nuts and three different kinds of fresh fruit with a bit of water. We have been drinking these smoothies for over a year now.

*Wendy McLean, Cameron, ON*

For arthritis aches and pains try this recipe: into 2 cups of water add 3-4 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar and 3-4 tablespoons of raw honey. Mix well and store in a closed bottle in the fridge. Every morning take 2 tablespoons.

*Jill Steeves, Fall River, NS*

Cherries are a good remedy for knee pain caused by arthritis (especially gout pain). Eat 20.

*K.M. Shiu, Scarborough, ON*



This is a simple way that I utilize Lakota. I put Lakota in the fridge and cool it down. I then apply the chilled Lakota in the affected achy location and, as the Lakota activates and reacts with my skin, the stiffness and pain disappears! I really like the feeling! Simple, yet effective!

*Michael Montague, Elora, ON*

For arthritis, have a bath in Epsom salts. Epsom salts have high magnesium content, which is good for arthritis.

*Tracey Linisky, Gilbert Plains, MB*



I use ground flaxseed in many ways while cooking to help keep symptoms of arthritis and joint inflammation in check.

*Shepherd Campbell, McKellar, ON*





## BACK PAIN

My favourite home remedy for back pain is: two cups of rice in a sock, sewn shut, then heated. You can position it however you want, and it's much more comfortable than sleeping/relaxing on a water bottle!

*Diane Dunbrack, Bowmanville, ON*

Ever wake up in the morning with a stiff back? What I find helps is to stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and try touching your toes. Bend down slowly and stretch as far as you can. Some mornings I can touch my toes; other mornings I can't. Hold this position for 20 seconds and slowly straighten up.

*David R. Nafziger, Kitchener, ON*



For help with your neck or back pain, take a pillowcase and throw in a tennis ball or hard ball of some kind—a soft spongy one doesn't work. Then, back yourself up to a wall and roll the ball up and down your neck and back for a do-it-yourself massage.

*Carol Anne Carstensen, West Vancouver, BC*

## MUSCLE PAIN

My home remedy for sore muscles is stretching. It sounds simple, but make sure you get up and stretch every couple of hours. It really goes a long way!

*Tara Hanley, Bowmanville, ON*

I find bath salts and a few drops of peppermint or eucalyptus in a warm bath will slowly melt away the pain and tiredness I feel in my joints and muscles.

*Jennifer Hebert, Thunder Bay, ON*

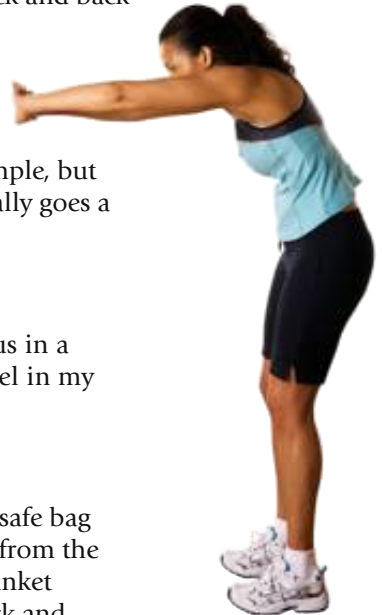


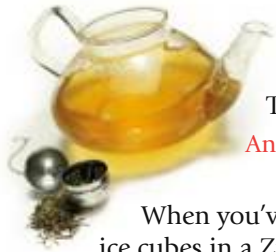
I take white pearl barley, pour it into a microwave-safe bag and heat it for about 1 minute. When I remove it from the microwave, I wrap it in a soft flannel receiving blanket used for babies. I place this on the back of my neck and the heat and the barley seem to relieve the stiffness. Try it, it works great!

*Holly Quaiscer, Calgary, AB*

For relief of muscle tension, I use a bath soak recipe of: 2 tablespoons fresh ginger root, 1 oz fresh rosemary, 20 drops rosemary oil, 20 drops lavender oil, 1 cup rose water. Put the fresh rosemary and ginger root in a cotton bag, and add the rest of the ingredients to the water. Swirl around so that they mix together and get in the tub and soak for 20 minutes.

*E. Liddell, Mississauga, ON*





A home remedy I like to use for muscle pain is to have some hot green tea. This relaxes you and, in turn, relaxes tight shoulder and back muscles.

*Anthony Bucci, Mississauga, ON*

When you've twisted an ankle, strained your back or simply overused a limb, try putting ice cubes in a Ziploc bag and wrap it in a damp tea towel. Apply to the sore area for 10 minutes on and 10 minutes off. This helps kill the pain and reduces inflammation.

*Tracey Hoey, Burlington, ON*

## STOMACH AND RELATED AILMENTS

I have found that anything with mint helps with nausea.

*Brenda Hunka, Vegreville, AB*

For bouts of upset stomach, settle it with ginger ale (one containing REAL ginger). It's good on bad days.

*Sean Cuthill, Victoria, BC*



When your stomach is upset, drink water with a little of baking soda, and it helps you feel better.

*Katheryn Rivas, Mississauga, ON*

Apple cider vinegar works for heartburn. Drink 1 tablespoon and your heartburn will be gone in less than 10 minutes.

*Mary Bosley, Parry Sound, ON*

To alleviate bloating and stomach cramps, I take a hand towel and wet it in water as hot as I can stand, then wring out the towel and drape it across my stomach.

*Tammie Banks, Saint John, NB*

This is a simple remedy for heartburn pain. It works every time and has never failed me. Take a spoonful of mustard and eat it. Heartburn will be gone before you know it.

*Richard Dezso, London, ON*



For vomiting, make rice water (put dry rice in a glass with lots of water, stir until cloudy); you can add sugar for taste and energy. Sip on the rice water.

*Ruby Pisko, Lethbridge, AB*

I suffer from frequent nausea, and one of the ways to make it bearable is to run cold water over the inside of my wrists. An ice pack to the back of the neck also helps.

*Andrea Oliver, St. John's, NL*

When I have bad pain from acid reflux I take a few spoonfuls of any kind of yogurt and it calms it right down.

Stacey Napier, Prince George, BC

In case of diarrhea drink a very strong black tea with no sugar.

Jacqueline Hollinger, Oshawa, ON



## MOSQUITO AND OTHER BITES

For mosquito bites, make a paste with water and baking powder and apply to bite.

Stanley Pijl, Fort Erie, ON

In our house we use toothpaste to help stop the itching of mosquito bites; the best is peppermint. Usually the itch will disappear within minutes of application on the bite.

Natalia Kucaba, Ontario, ON



I relieve the pain from mosquito bites by using a damp washcloth soaked in plain white vinegar on the bites. The swelling goes down and the painful itch subsides. It works very well for me.

Tyler Hill, Chatham, ON

For spider bites, my neighbour told me to get some dirt out of the garden and mix it with a little water until it was thick mud, then rub a layer of it over the bite and swollen area of my arm, let it dry for 30 minutes, then wash it off. The inflammation and the swelling had gone right down and all I could see were the puncture marks of the bite.

Irene Rothwell, St. Catharines, ON

I immediately apply honey to bee stings. The relief is almost instantaneous!

Dave Donatelli, Abbotsford, BC



To take the sting out and prevent a bee sting from swelling up, cut an onion in half and place it on the sting. It will relieve the pain and prevent swelling.

Sharon McIntyre, Prince George, BC

## SORE THROAT

My home remedy: If I have a sore throat I put a teaspoon of honey in a cup of hot water along with the juice of half a lemon. I sip on this before I go to bed and I am usually fine in the morning.

Patricia Mitchell, Lanark, ON



When a sore throat hits, gargling with warm salt water will help kill the bacteria.

Pat Vanthuyne, Delhi, ON



My home remedy is to suppress a cough that hurts your throat. Mix 2 tablespoons of molasses with a ¼ teaspoon of ginger. This remedy has always helped me as a child and now as an adult to sooth my throat and help suppress that annoying hacking cough.

Joanne Hughson, Sussex, NB

## HEADACHES

I don't know what it is about stimulating the scalp, but having someone run their fingers through my hair is the perfect remedy when I feel a migraine coming on. It provides immediate relief.

Sarah Corner, Brockville, ON

With the type of headaches I get, the best solution is often a home remedy. Lay down with a cool washcloth on my forehead and covering my eyes. The cool and dark often does the trick.

Kirsten Yee, Burnaby, BC

Whenever I have a headache, I try this first: A cold pack on the back of my neck and maybe another one on my forehead. After 15 minutes of relaxing with the ice packs I generally feel well enough to carry on with my regular routine.

Shirley Hill, Chatham, ON



If you have a headache drink two glasses of water in the first hour and one every hour after until it is gone.

Breanna Sherk, Caledonia, ON

## SUNBURN

If you are suffering with pain from a severe sunburn, try pouring vinegar on the burnt area. It will draw the heat right out. This is well worth the trade off of smelling like a pickle.

Bruce Chartrand, Kingston, ON



## TOOTHACHE

If you ever have a toothache or a cracked tooth and can't get to a dentist right away: Crush up some cloves and make a paste and place on your tooth. The cloves will ease the pain.

Mike Woelk, AB



## RELIEVING STRESS

Take deep breaths and push your stomach out when inhaling. Do this for a minute and then relax.

*Courtney Jones, Calgary, AB*

For pain or stress: Run a very warm bath before bedtime. Add 1 tablespoon of your favourite shampoo. Next, add 1 teaspoon of mineral oil, or any other kind of non-fragrance oil. Last, add several dashes of your favourite perfume. Relax and enjoy for about 20 minutes, adding hot water as needed. I guarantee this remedy will give you the best sleep in the world.

*Marcia L. Theriault, Quebec City, QC*



A good night of deep sleep, if you can get it, is the best healing potion out there.

*Karen Hiebert, Abbotsford, BC*

## PIMPLES

Use toothpaste on your pimples while you sleep to dry them out quicker.

*Robin Millar, Edmonton, AB*

## EAR PAIN

For ear pain, nuke some olive oil in the microwave. Wait until it has sufficiently cooled down. Then take a Q-Tip and gently dab the now warm olive oil in your ear, proceed to take some cotton and put it in your ear so the oil does not run out. Take a warm cloth, place it on top of the ear that hurts with the olive oil in it, lie down and try to relax.

*Jennifer Borges, Hamilton, ON*



My family has used this home remedy for generations; it seems to work no matter what the ailment. Homemade chicken soup. It is still the best home remedy for all types of illnesses.

*Joanne Lavoie, Lethbridge, AB*

## OTHER TIPS

Hiccups!! A spoonful of peanut butter always works! In less than a minute the hiccups should be gone.

*Nathalie Lapierre, Falconbridge, ON*



After years of pain I was told about Lakota and all I can say is, oh my—it has eliminated all of my pain. I was scheduled for surgery and I even cancelled it because of this fantastic product.

*Heather Harris, Lewis Mountain, NB*



# Appendix: Lakota product guide

Since its inception over 10 years ago, Lakota has developed a range of formulas that fight different kinds of pain. Once you try them, these products will speak for themselves—which is why Lakota remains Canada's number one pain reliever. Read on for information on Lakota products.

## ■ JOINT CARE FORMULA

Joint Care Formula is the original Lakota joint health supplement. It's the product we recommend first to anyone with Joint or Arthritis Pain. It is made with a combination of traditional herbal ingredients and modern scientifically produced ingredients. The traditional herbal ingredients are based around the White Willow Bark pain reliever. White Willow Bark was used by indigenous peoples for centuries to relieve pain.

The key pain reliever in White Willow Bark is a compound called salicin, which is the basis of aspirin. What makes aspirin a poor substitute for White Willow Bark is the side effects. Aspirin replaces salicin with acetylsalicylic acid, which is hard on the stomach lining. Natural-source salicin, however, converts to salicylic acid in the stomach, preventing the harmful, damaging effect of aspirin.

The White Willow Bark used in the Joint Care Formula is a unique variety that meets special potency standards. Most White Willow Bark available in Canada is not potency tested, so it is impossible to know how much of the active compound it contains. The White Willow Bark used in Joint Care Formula, however, has the highest potency of salicin available anywhere in the world.

Lakota Joint Care Formula also contains Devil's Claw, an effective pain reliever, especially when used in conjunction with the White Willow Bark. Only the root of Devil's Claw is used in the Lakota formulations. This is important because only the root contains the active harpagosides, which are natural anti-inflammatories and pain relievers.



Another ingredient is boswellia. Related to the ancient frankincense plant, boswellia produces a sticky resin that has an anti-inflammatory effect.

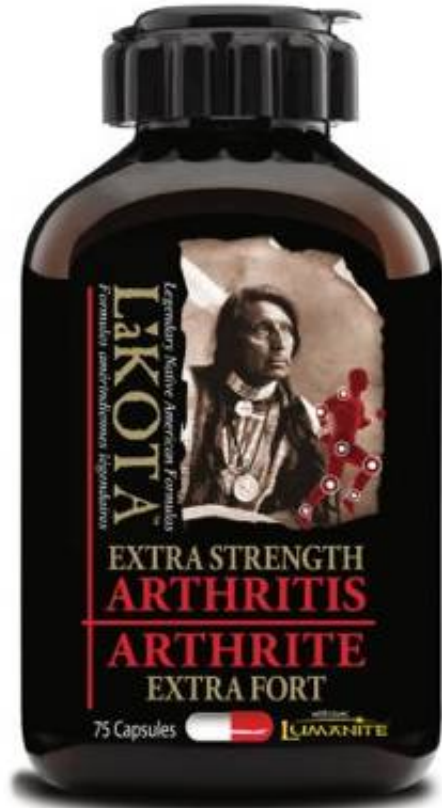
Collagen type II is one of the modern ingredients used in the Joint Care Formula. It is made from chicken sternum cartilage. Collagen type II is the type of collagen found in synovial fluid (joint fluid).

Lakota Joint Care Formula also has a daily dose of glucosamine, a building block of joint cartilage. On its own, glucosamine has limited effectiveness, but together with the natural anti-inflammatories and pain relievers it provides additional joint lubrication.

A new addition to the original Joint Care Formula is Lumanite, a medicinal mineral. Lumanite contains copper, manganese, selenium and pantothenic acid. Trace amounts of these mineral compounds aid in rebuilding the building blocks of joints.

Lakota Joint Care Formula has become the number one joint health formula available in Canada. Millions of bottles have been sold in Canada alone. That's no surprise: a great many arthritis sufferers are living a more active and fulfilled life since taking the Lakota Joint Care Formula.

The best way to use the Joint Care Formula is to take two pills in the morning and two at night. When first starting out, it often helps to take an extra two pills at lunchtime to speed up the pain-relieving effects. Once the pain has subsided, you can try to move to a maintenance dose of two pills per day. If the pain increases, move back to two in the morning and two at night.



### ■ RHEUMATOID FORMULA

The Lakota Rheumatoid Formula was formerly called the Rheumatoid-Osteo Formula. It consists of collagen type II together with L-proline, an amino acid that helps transport the collagen type II to the joint cartilage. The formulation has both bovine and chicken collagen to provide the optimal molecular composition.

The Rheumatoid Formula is especially effective with rheumatoid arthritis. Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disorder that results in the body beginning to reject its own cartilage. Several clinical studies have examined the role of a collagen type II supplement in rheumatoid arthritis. One important study, from Harvard, found that collagen type II can be effective in relieving rheumatoid arthritis pain, even in small doses.

Although the product is called Rheumatoid Formula, we recommend taking it as a joint supplement for anyone who puts a lot of strain on their joints: runners, gardeners, construction workers and anyone who does a lot of bending and lifting.

The recommended use of Lakota Rheumatoid Formula is to take two capsules every morning with breakfast. Taking four capsules for the first month may speed up the recovery process. Rheumatoid Formula has almost no interactions with other medications, so it is generally safe to take together with Lakota Joint Care or Extra Strength Arthritis or a glucosamine supplement.

### ■ EXTRA STRENGTH ARTHRITIS

Lakota Extra Strength Arthritis is an entirely new formulation based around ASU. ASU (Avocado Soybean Unsaponifiables) is a natural extract from avocado and soybean oil. This natural extract takes two months to become fully effective; but once it is working, the pain relief lasts. It is one of the leading formulations available anywhere in the world. Based on clinical research, ASU is one of the most effective products for arthritis.

This formula is a good choice if you have severe joint or arthritis pain and the Joint Care Formula does not seem to provide sufficient relief.

The recommended way to use the Extra Strength Arthritis Formula is to take two tablets every morning with breakfast. It must be taken for two months to show a beneficial effect.





#### ■ LAKOTA PM

Lakota PM was added to the Lakota product lineup in 2007. At the time it was introduced, no other pain reliever-sleep aid combinations were available in Canada.

Like many of the Lakota pain-relieving supplements, Lakota PM contains a special variety of White Willow Bark, carefully prepared to preserve the high level of salicin from the original plant. This special variety of White Willow Bark is the most potent form available anywhere.

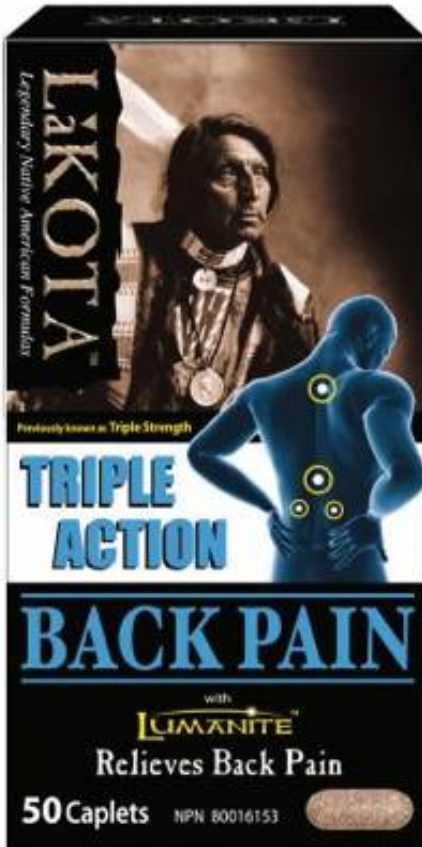
In combination with pain relief, Lakota PM offers a gentle, natural sleep aid. It contains a combination of valerian, passion flower, hops and melatonin. Like many of the other ingredients used in Lakota products, the specific preparations are unique. The valerian used in the Lakota PM is processed using patented equipment that make it possible to reduce the cellulose plant matter, making it much more potent than any off-the-shelf variety. This vale-

rian, combined with the other natural sleep aids, improves sleep without causing unpleasant, groggy mornings.

Many people who try Lakota PM are surprised at how well they sleep—often they get the first good sleep they've had in weeks. Lakota PM can be used together with the other Lakota pain relievers.

The recommended use of Lakota PM is two tablets about an hour before bedtime. This allows the natural pain relievers and sleep aids to work their way into your system. It can be taken in combination with other Lakota products. Because of the natural sleep aids in the product, we don't recommend taking more than two per day. Never operate machinery of any kind after taking Lakota PM.





### ■ TRIPLE ACTION BACK PAIN

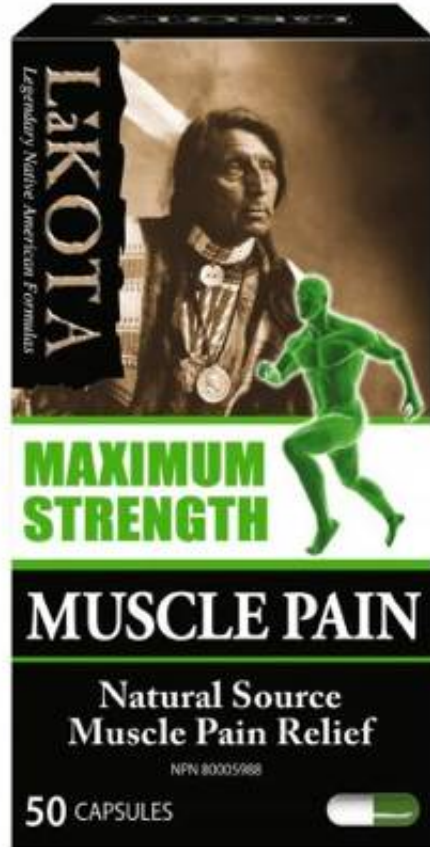
Lakota Triple Action Back Pain is a world-renowned natural pain-relieving tablet specifically for upper and lower back pain. For pure pain relief, there is nothing stronger. It's our most potent pain-relieving formula. It features the two specially processed extracts: White Willow Bark and Devil's Claw. Both are made from world-class sources and careful processing to get the maximum natural pain relief in a tablet.

There is no product comparable to Triple Action Back Pain. Not only does it have the two strong natural pain relievers working together, it also has natural muscle relaxants. Often back pain is related to muscle tension. Lakota Triple Action Back Pain addresses muscle tension with a tailored valerian extract and with black cohosh.

Triple Action Back Pain also contains Lumanite, a medicinal mineral. Lumanite contains copper, manganese, selenium and pantothenic acid. This mineral combination works on restoring the connective tissues that are vital to back health.

Relieving pain, relaxing muscles, rebuilding connective tissue—Lakota Triple Action Back Pain is back pain medicine that works.

To use the Lakota Triple Action Back Pain, take two tablets every four hours up to a maximum of six tablets daily or as directed by a health care practitioner. Take additional caution when combining this with the Lakota PM as both products produce a potent natural relaxing effect. Can be used for both chronic and acute back pain.



### ■ MAXIMUM STRENGTH MUSCLE PAIN

Lakota Maximum Strength Muscle Pain is a herbal pain reliever for sore and overworked muscles. Combining White Willow Bark and Devil's Claw root, common to most Lakota pain relievers, it adds a large dose of processed boswellia extract that is more potent than any other available. Maximum Strength Muscle Pain is a combination herbal product that takes a multifactor approach to pain. It adds yucca, sarsaparilla root and feverfew leaf and is packaged in a gelatin capsule. The gelatin capsule speeds up the delivery of these multifactor pain relievers.

Lakota Maximum Strength Muscle Pain is best used immediately after overuse or intense exercise. We even recommend taking it before intense exercise when you know you're likely to be in pain later. Pain from muscle overuse is primarily due to inflammation from micro-tears in muscle fibres. By limiting inflammation right from the start, muscle pain is inhibited before it begins.





## LAKOTA ROLL-ONS AND SOFT TOUCH

### What makes Lakota Roll-on pain relievers so effective?

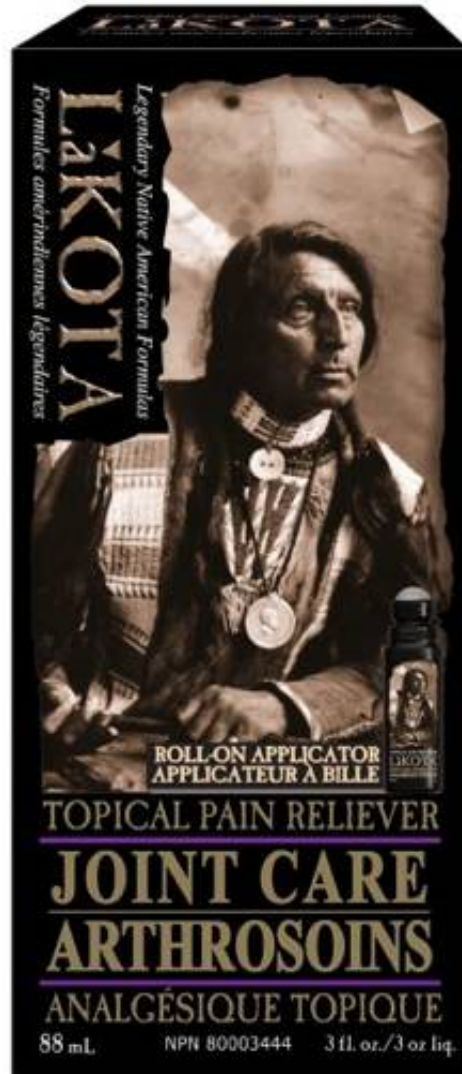
Lakota Roll-on and Soft Touch pain relievers have a unique natural ingredient: an extract from the pepper plant, known as capsaicin. Capsaicin is the element that gives heat to peppers. In the past, it was used by indigenous peoples as a pain reliever. More recently, scientists in turn have “discovered” the natural pain relieving properties of capsaicin.

A form of capsaicin has been on the market for some time, available in specialty stores. But it has remained unpopular; its effectiveness as a pain reliever is limited. That’s because the capsaicin you find on shelves is almost always synthetic capsaicin. Synthetic capsaicin passes the basic required lab test to be called capsaicin, and it’s cheaper and easier to work with. But it doesn’t work like natural capsaicin. Synthetic capsaicin is missing at least two of the pain-relieving compounds found in natural capsaicin.

Lakota Roll-on and Soft Touch pain relievers use a natural extract of capsaicin—that’s what makes the products so effective. But it isn’t easy to make. Just as vegetables from the garden vary in sizes, texture or taste from one year to the next, the capsaicin produced in peppers is subject to extreme fluctuations. Natural capsaicin varies from batch to batch.

So, in order to use the natural extract, every batch produced by Lakota must be made with a slightly different formula. Few companies are willing to put up with a production process that varies from batch to batch, but that’s what we do at Lakota. In order to get the best possible product, each batch is tailored by hand to meet our specific standards.

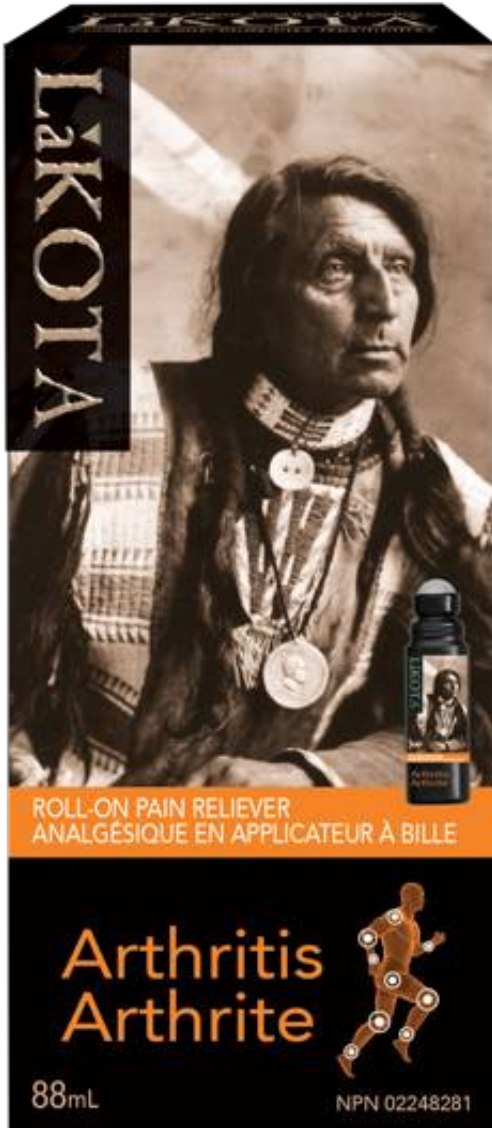
In fact, you may even have noticed that the colour of the Roll-on or Soft Touch varies slightly depending on the batch. That’s because the orange colour of the peppers, which comes from the natural colour of the peppers, can vary. Rather than worry about colour consistency, we have rigorous



### ■ JOINT CARE ROLL-ON

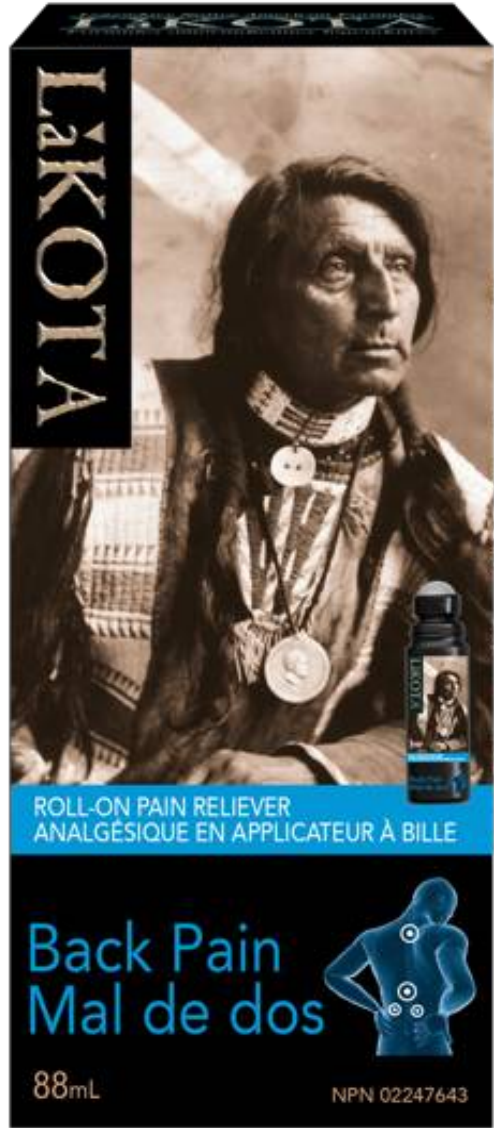
Joint Care Roll-on was the original natural roll-on pain reliever that launched Lakota. Its formula combines the unique natural capsaicin extract with herbal additives. In addition to capsaicin, it has juniper-berry oil, Canada balsam, yarrow extract and birch oil. These tree oils help the Lakota Joint Care Roll-on absorb easily into the skin to provide maximum anti-inflammatory action right in the joint.





■ **ARTHRITIS ROLL-ON**

Lakota Arthritis Roll-on is a pure natural capsaicin extract formulation without the added herbal oils of the Joint Care Roll-on. Some customers prefer this easy-to-apply, odourless formulation to all others. Try it first for joint and arthritis pain. It can be used on knees, hands, ankles, hips, shoulders, wrists and back.



■ **BACK PAIN ROLL-ON**

Lakota Back Pain Roll-on was introduced in 2007. It is based on the same natural capsaicin extract, but with added menthol. The menthol provides instant cooling relief, and the natural capsaicin extract provides longer-term pain management. The roll-on applicator makes it possible to apply this to your back on your own. The applicator also works as a massaging tool, providing the pressure that fingers are often too weak to give. Can be used on lower back pain, pain around the spinal area and shoulder pain.

standards for pain-relieving efficacy, and so we allow the natural orange colour to vary slightly. We know that our customers care less about consistent colour than about consistent pain relief.

Natural capsaicin in Lakota also works in a unique way. It doesn't simply cover up pain with heat—it actually blocks the chemicals that transmit pain signals. When the Lakota Roll-on or Soft Touch is applied to the painful area, the capsaicin is absorbed and selectively binds to pain sensors. These nerve sensors are the same nerves that sense heat, so a sensation of heat is produced. Activating the pain sensors depletes the receptors of substance P—the chemical that transmits pain signals—greatly reducing the sensation of pain. To make a long story short: Lakota Roll-on and Soft Touch pain relievers don't mask pain: They actually stop pain at the source.

### Using Lakota Roll-on and Soft Touch products

To use the Lakota Roll-on or Soft Touch pain relievers, shake the container to bring the thick gel to the applicator-end of the bottle. Tap the bottle on your palm lid-down, while the lid is still on; this helps bring all the gel into contact with the roller ball or sponge. If you're using the Roll-on container, roll the ball over the painful area, covering it with the pain-relieving gel. Some people like to apply pressure with the ball to massage the painful area.

Allow a few minutes for the pain-relieving gel to absorb before covering with clothing. Some people prefer to use their hands to massage the Lakota into the skin to speed up absorption. This is not required, but it may help. Be sure to wash your hands after you touch the pain-relieving gel, as it can sting your eyes.

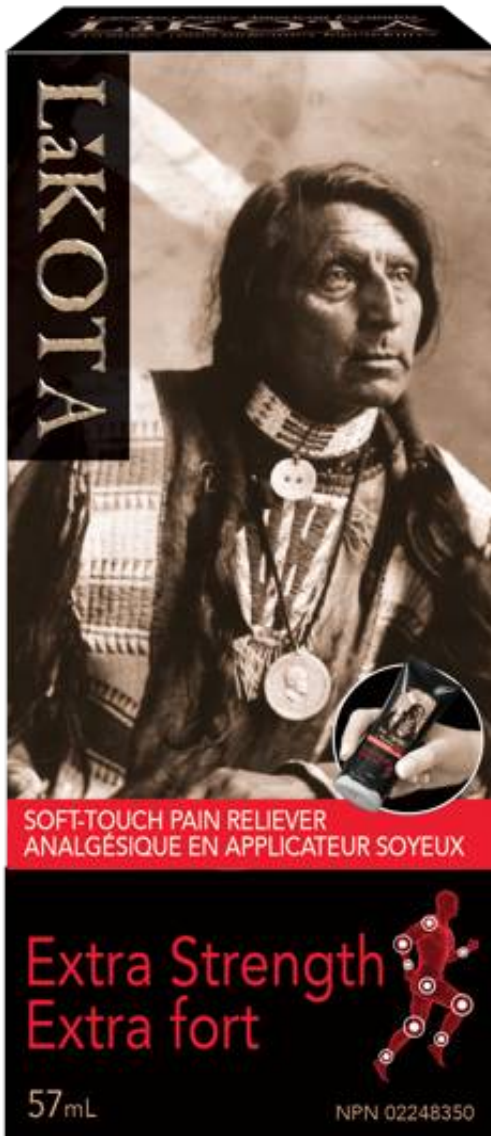
Similarly, to apply Lakota with the Soft Touch sponge, squeeze the tube while the sponge is on the painful area and massage the gel into the skin with the sponge. This works great as a pain-free massage.

Apply four times per day or as often as needed. The Lakota can last up to 24 hours, and often people feel it warm up again in



#### ■ MUSCLE PAIN ROLL-ON

The Lakota Muscle Pain Roll-on is an odourless formula designed with the weekend warrior in mind. Like the other Lakota rubs, it features the natural capsaicin extracted from specially selected pepper plants. The muscle rub also has added herbal oils to provide additional soothing relief. It's meant for those days when overuse or injury has made muscles stiff and painful. We recommend using the roll-on applicator as a massaging tool to loosen muscles as you apply the pain-relieving gel.



#### ■ EXTRA STRENGTH SOFT TOUCH

Lakota Extra Strength Soft Touch is currently the best selling of the Lakota Roll-on and Soft Touch pain relievers. It has a stronger dose of the special capsaicin extract, as well as a menthol enhancer. This is the formula to use on the toughest pain. Some may find it too powerful!

Unique to the Extra Strength is the Soft Touch applicator. This applicator was developed together with Lakota customers to allow the application on arthritic hands with the softest possible touch. This applicator can also be used for gentle massage.



the shower the next morning. That's because water activates the capsaicin.

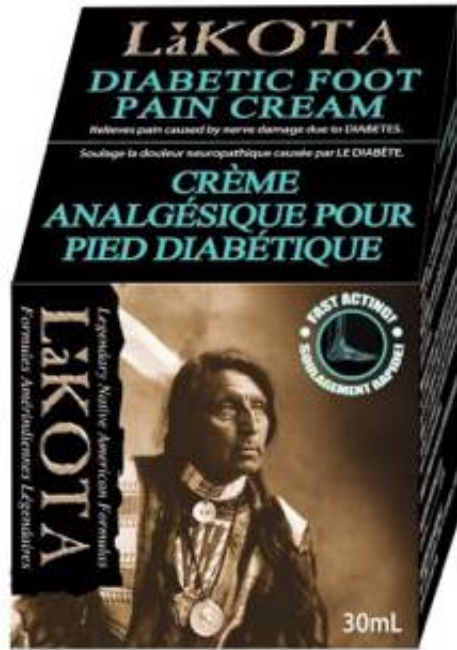
If the area Lakota was applied to is tightly wrapped or covered up, it may in some cases cause a sensation of extreme heat. This is due to the triggering of the body's heat sensors. If this occurs, avoid getting the skin wet, as water activates the capsaicin. If the product was applied within the last five minutes, it may be possible to limit absorption by washing the area with soap and water. But if it has been more than five minutes since application, apply ice to the area to provide cooling. A bag of frozen vegetables works well.

The Lakota Roll-on and Soft Touch pain relievers are by far the most effective pain rubs available on the market: No other prescription or over-the-counter product works like it. We have received thousands of testimonials from Canadians about how Lakota relieved pain that other products couldn't touch. If you are a Lakota user, why not share your pain relief secret with your friends and family?

Lakota supplements can be used together with the Roll-on or Soft Touch pain relievers. Many customers find the following approach works best: Joint Care Formula for long-term joint health and pain relief and the Roll-on or Soft Touch for day-to-day flare-ups. Joint Care Formula can also be used before arthritis sets in to help keep the joint healthy and to prevent pain.

The supplements are all designed in such a way that they can be used together, as long as no more than nine Lakota pills are taken in any one day. The nine pills can be a combination of different formulas, or a single formula.

If you're taking prescription drugs, your doctor should review the supplements before you take them. Lakota is strong, effective medicine and, as such, it should be used responsibly.



#### ■ DIABETIC FOOT PAIN CREAM

The Lakota Diabetic Foot Pain Cream is different from the rest of the Lakota rubs: It's the only Lakota rub in a silky-smooth cream. Designed for use on pain from nerve damage caused by diabetes, it is a pain reliever and foot cream in one. It contains a potent dose of the natural capsaicin extract to relieve the stinging pain of nerve damage, and also contains shea butter, peppermint oil and green tea extract to help smooth the skin on the feet.

Diabetic Foot Pain Cream can be used on feet and hands for any kind of tingling, stinging or burning pain, especially pain caused by diabetes. As with all Lakota rubs, be sure to wash your hands after use; the natural pepper extract can sting eyes or nose if accidentally touched by hands that have applied the cream.



## CANINE CARE

**Dogs can suffer from arthritis, too. Lakota can help.**

It comes as a surprise to some, but Lakota offers incredibly effective pain relief for dogs with sore joints. Pain-free walks for your four-legged friend: Nothing will make your dog happier. And that will make you happier, too.



### ■ CANINE JOINT CARE

The Lakota Canine Joint Care is the canine equivalent of the Joint Care Formula. It has many of the same ingredients as the human formula, but is specially tailored for canines. It comes in a beef liver-flavoured chewable tablet, making it easy to administer. In addition to the regular ingredients, it has elk antler velvet. More than just a flavour improvement, elk antler velvet is a key veterinary anti-inflammatory.

We get a number of testimonials about how well the Joint Care Formula for humans work. But for Canine Joint Care, however, the letters are really gushing, telling us that the product completely renewed their dog. Numerous stories have described a dog that was unable to climb into the car or walk up the stairs but that is now able to run and jump like a puppy. Nothing makes true believers faster: You can't fool a dog into feeling better!



# THE LAKOTA STORY

*After suffering for years from the debilitating pain of arthritis, British Columbia farmer Don Pedersen discovered the healing traditions of Native peoples and their unique herbal medicines.*

*After seeing first-hand how well these medicines worked, he and his son Kent began developing products based on Native American natural formulations. This is the story of the creation of Lakota, its products and of the two Dawson Creek farmers who, with lots of passion but little conventional business knowledge, built a thriving company that is now a household name all over North America.*



Lakota's mission to change the way people treat pain began in Northern British Columbia more than 10 years ago, with father-and-son farmers Don and Kent Pedersen. Don had been the head of the family farm for more than 30 years, but was beginning to slow down—and not by choice. After years of working the farm, arthritis was setting in. The busiest seasons, springtime and harvest, were becoming more and more difficult and the pain more intense.

Springtime on the family farm signaled long days of planting, which requires lifting, bending, twisting, climbing up and down on the tractor, getting in and out to adjust the settings and more. And the Pedersen's didn't operate an ordinary family farm. Standard crops like wheat, barley, oats and canola had given way to specialized grass seed. The margin for error was slim; seed had to be planted at the right depth and the right rate. Mistakes were costly, as the golf courses that bought their specialized seed accepted only the highest quality product.

All farmers require nerves of steel, but growing specialized seed multiplied the risk. Prices for the harvest were much more volatile, seed was much more costly and quality standards were more strict. It was a high-stakes game. But Don thought that he could win, and he was proved right. He and his son Kent plunged into the market.

## **DON'S ARTHRITIS AND BREAKTHROUGH DISCOVERY**

The farm was thriving; Don and Kent's research and careful planning were paying off. But Don's arthritis kept getting worse. Refusing to allow his chronic pain to dominate the life he loved, Don sought a solution. Being a farmer, he preferred something natural to a pharmaceutical drug. He researched and tried several different natural treatments. Not afraid to experiment, he even travelled to Mexico and other clinics to try treatments from around the world.



Work together, play together: A Lakota crew taking in the sun during a team-building exercise.

Time passed, and still nothing was working. Soon, the pain would drive Don to prescription medication. But one day, Don was given a pain remedy by a friend. The friend had developed a treatment that contained herbs used by Native Americans to heal sore joints. Along with these ancient herbs, it was supplemented with modern natural ingredients such as glucosamine and collagen type II.

Don was skeptical at first, especially having tried so many alternatives. But the product worked unlike anything he had tried: He became completely pain-free. After 30 days of use, he regained the kind of mobility he hadn't had for years—maybe decades. The change in him was obvious; his son Kent noticed it, too.

Don knew people needed to hear about this remarkable pain reliever—he was so convinced that he bought the formula.

## **BURIED ALIVE**

It wasn't long before Kent too would learn first-hand how well the product worked. Kent and his Dad were avid snowmobilers. Not content to ride off-the-shelf snow machines, they spent hours and days tinkering and tweaking and adding aftermarket parts. They rode snowmobiles that produced well over 100 horsepower, long before really high-power snowmobiles were available from the dealer. Their snowmobiles took off like rockets.

These hand-modified snowmobiles were not for trail cruising. They were made for racing—specifically, for hill climbing. Kent was a world-class snowmobile racer and had won many hill climbing competitions. Countless winter hours were spent fine-tuning the machines and practicing hill climbs.

But one day, it all came crashing down—literally. An avalanche struck, and Kent was buried alive. You may have heard that snow in an avalanche packs as hard as concrete. Kent can tell you from experience that it's true.

*One day, it all came crashing down—literally. An avalanche struck, and Kent was buried alive under four feet of snow.*

Tossed and thrown around in the tumbling onslaught, he came to a stop buried under four feet of rock-hard snow. He was badly injured and had multiple fractures. Trapped under the weight of the snow, he was unable to move.

Thankfully, Kent used proper avalanche safety devices. His locator beacon flashed furiously while his friends frantically searched. They quickly located the beacon and began digging. In minutes, they had him out.

*Within one week of trying the pain reliever, Kent felt much much better. And by the end of the month he was pain-free.*

Kent was seriously injured and had to be medevaced off the mountain. He recovered over the next few months, but he remained in constant pain, especially with back pain. Don suggested

he try **Lakota Joint Care Formula**. Kent hesitated; “Isn’t that just for old people with arthritis?” he asked. After several more weeks in pain, he finally relented. Within one week of trying the pain reliever, he felt much better. By the end of the month, he was pain-free. He couldn’t believe it. There was no denying this product’s extraordinary power.

### **THE FIRST STEP: A US LAUNCH**

Don and Kent felt the time was right to bring Lakota to the world. They decided to launch Lakota in the United States; the larger market would make it easier to find partners. Lakota was essentially a health food product, so they figured the best place to launch it was the Health Food Expo in Anaheim, California—the largest health food show in the world. They put together a trade show booth that highlighted Lakota’s Native American roots, including an authentic Plains Indian teepee made from buffalo hide. It was a great success. Crowds of people wanted get a closer look at the Lakota booth, and the lineups overflowed into neighboring booths. The excitement around the product was phenomenal. Don and Kent were confident they would soon find the right partner to help them introduce Lakota to the world.

The Lakota teepee, made with real buffalo hide, that made a splash at the Health Food Expo in California.





One well-known over-the-counter (OTC) pharmaceutical manufacturer—a billion-dollar company—saw the potential of the Lakota product, and approached Don and Kent for an exclusive deal for the US. They would introduce Lakota to health food stores, and promised to get the product into large US retailers like Walmart and Walgreens.

Thinking that this would be the best way to get Lakota to the masses, Don and Kent signed the deal. Knowing how Lakota changed his life, Don really was anxious for the product to be widely available as soon as possible. By themselves, they may only have been able to get Lakota into a few health food stores; to get into big US retailers they needed major backing.

Sure Lakota would succeed, Don and Kent turned over the formula to the OTC manufacturer. “It will be in health food stores within a year,” they were told. But a year came and went, and Lakota languished. The US partner explained that this was because the plants were running at capacity—but once manufacturing started, Lakota would soon go to Walmart. Don and Kent remained patient—they were farmers, after all. They knew that some things can take time, like the wait before harvest, and getting impatient doesn’t speed things up.

Two years went by without any progress. Finally, Don and Kent went to meet with the US partner at the American head office. By this time the company had merged with another OTC manufacturer and was even larger than before. Kent and Don asked if there was anything they could do to speed things up.

But after a few meetings with key personnel, they left with a bad feeling. No one seemed to share their eagerness to get Lakota into stores.

On the trip home they started to realize that they had given away the farm, so to speak. Don and Kent hadn’t received any money up front—they’d never imagined their US partner would balk at manufacturing the product. They had even invested some of their own money into advertising. Now that the OTC had a new owner, there was little incentive to manufacture Lakota; in fact, there was actually motivation to keep it off the shelves. The new OTC sold products that competed directly with Lakota, and they were cheaper to manufacture.

*The excitement around the product was phenomenal. Don and Kent were confident they would find the right partner to help them introduce Lakota to the world.*

## **OBSTACLES OVERCOME, LESSONS LEARNED**

Don and Kent were shocked at the way things had happened. It should have been simple, they thought: Lakota was obviously a great product, so everyone should jump at the chance to manufacture it. It was Don and Kent’s first lesson in “big pharmaceuticals.” Big pharmaceuticals are not always interested in the most effective products; they’re interested in the most profitable products, which often means the cheapest ones to manufacture. But the knowledge came too late: Lakota had signed over US rights to the OTC for five years, and there was nothing they could do.

Since the US was locked up for another couple of years, Don and Kent turned their sights to the Canadian market. They would not make the same mistake they made in the US by partnering with a large OTC manufacturer: This time they

would go it alone. Don and Kent talked about the fundamental strategy that would come to define the Lakota approach. “No one believes in this product more than we do,” they agreed. “And no one can do a better job getting the products into the hands of consumers than we can.” So Lakota set up operations in Canada, and started selling directly to health food stores.

## A NEW PLAN OF ATTACK

Some health foods stores readily embraced Lakota; others were hesitant. It wasn’t surprising; stores are inundated with so many new products that saying “no” is just a reflex.

After a few stores agreed to stock Lakota products, Don and Kent placed an ad in the *Edmonton Journal*. The ad explained what Lakota was and how it was different from other arthritis treatments on the market. Not being professionals in marketing, Don and Kent prepared the ad as if they were describing the product to friends and neighbours. They didn’t know marketing spin; but they knew their product and how well it worked.

The ad was a success; the product sold out of health foods stores that stocked it. They didn’t make nearly enough to pay for the ad, but the victory convinced Don and Kent to continue investing and getting their message out. They knew that once people tried Lakota, its popularity would grow and grow.

After the ad in the *Edmonton Journal*, they took the next step: national advertising. Unable to afford television advertising or pages in major consumer magazines, they opted for *Alive* magazine. *Alive* is a leading health magazine in Canada, freely distributed at most health food stores.

They knew instinctively that they needed to create a big impact. Too many ads in too many magazines spread over time would thin out the message. So they took a gamble. They took all of their ad money and splurged on a two-page spread.

It was a huge amount to risk on advertising, but they wanted to make a big bang. When advertisers use two-page spreads, they usually want to show off flashy photos or eye-catching graphics. Don and Kent had a different idea: They would simply fill the pages with information. There were details about Lakota’s natural ingredients and references to clinical studies. In short, they broke pretty much every established rule of advertising. The ads were a solid grey mass of text. The typeface was actually smaller than the regular magazine font. And they didn’t shy away from detailing the technical aspects of the product and its ingredients.

It’s fairly common for advertisers to assume that customers don’t understand technical information, or don’t want to. But Lakota took a different approach. Don and Kent wanted to explain the product as if they were speaking to people just like them. They created the kind of ad that they themselves would like to see.

The response was overwhelming—the phone at Lakota rang off the hook! The number one question they received was, “Where can I find Lakota?” Over and over, Don and Kent directed people to their local health food store. Some stores, however, were still unwilling to stock this new product, so Don and Kent faced a unique dilemma. “How can we distribute a product that consumers want but stores



*“No one believes in this product more than we do,” they agreed.*



are reluctant to carry?" they wondered. They came up with their own solution—not one found in any business-school textbook.

### SPECIAL DELIVERY

Don and Kent knew that hiring a sales force would be a long, expensive process. It would raise the product's cost, but add nothing of value for the consumer. So instead of hiring a sales force, they came up with a radically different approach—sending their product directly to stores, free of charge. They sent six units of **Lakota Joint Care Formula** to almost every health food store in Canada.

It was a huge gamble; had it failed, it would have spelled the end of Lakota. But Don and Kent were so confident in their product that they were willing to prime the pump by giving it away. They cleared out a shop on the family farm and started boxing product, six bottles at a time. They crammed the back of their pickup with boxes and hauled them to the post office. (Understandably, the post office was less than thrilled to handle loads by the pickup-truckfull!) They paid for each parcel as it was weighed, until the post office set up a commercial account for them. For days, all they did was haul parcels to the post office, and hundreds of stores began to receive free bottles of Lakota along with brochures. Don and Kent also ran more two-page ads in *Alive* magazine.

The huge bet on the power of their product paid off. Thanks to the *Alive* magazine ads, the health food stores sold every last bottle and placed orders for more. Word of mouth was spreading rapidly, and Lakota was on its way to becoming a health sensation. Production had to be ramped up to keep pace with increasing demand.

### DON AND KENT RISK EVERYTHING

It wasn't long until big retailers came knocking. Shoppers Drug Mart was excited about Lakota. They agreed to put in a large display of Lakota product, shaped like a teepee, with real feathers dangling from the sides. True, they were actually turkey feathers painted to look like eagle feathers, but each display was handmade on the Pedersen farm. The display was massive, filled with more than \$1,000 worth of Lakota products.

Unfamiliar with drug store industry practice, Don and Kent thought it was perfect: It looked great and attracted attention. Unfortunately, the plan was too ambitious. At the end of the promotion the displays came back with lots of product unsold.



Care package: A box of Lakota Joint Care Formula, ready to be shipped.

*They put in a large display of Lakota product, shaped like a teepee, with real feathers dangling from the sides.*



Absorbing this much inventory in returns would have sunk many fledgling companies. But one of Lakota's founding principles was "no debt," and this principle served the company well over the years.

Taking on debt would have been easy for a fast-growing business like Lakota. But it comes at a cost, not limited to interest payments. Borrowing from a bank means the banker has a say in how the business is run. Don and Kent preferred to put up their own money, pouring income from the family farm into Lakota.

Few people would keep sinking money into a business that isn't earning a profit, but Don and Kent were thinking long-term. They cashed in their RRSPs and invested everything they had into the company. Once people tried Lakota, they thought, the product's results would speak for themselves. But Don and Kent knew they needed more advertising to get the message out. It was time for an even bigger national ad campaign.

### **THE LAKOTA ARTHRITIS NEWS IS LAUNCHED**

To reach a broader audience, Don and Kent could have advertised in major consumer magazines. Instead, they went directly to the people. They created a four-page newsletter called *Lakota Arthritis News* and paid for it to be inserted into local newspapers across the country.

Like the *Alive* magazine ads, the newsletter was packed with information. The conventional wisdom is that people don't like to read technical information. But, as you probably know by now, Don and Kent weren't interested in following convention.

Unable to compete with the advertising budgets of major pharmaceutical companies, Lakota needed a way to stand apart. Consumers are used to being bombarded with ads about conventional drug therapies, so persuading them to try a natural-source pain reliever wouldn't be easy. Don and Kent believed that lots of convincing information would help them make their case.

*Many of the ingredients in the Lakota formulas, such as white willow bark and yucca root, have been used in traditional Native American medicines for centuries, although modern natural ingredients, such as glucosamine and type II collagen, have been added to enhance the effects.*

The first *Arthritis News*, distributed in British Columbia in January 2003, convinced thousands of consumers to buy **Lakota Joint Care Formula** at their local health food store. With the money from the first set of orders, the newsletter was sent to Alberta households. The same thing happened there. After several months, Lakota's *Arthritis News* had been distributed across the country. Lakota now had a national presence. Things were getting exciting: Customers from BC to Newfoundland were using Lakota and finding relief for arthritis and joint pain.

*Things were getting exciting:  
Customers from BC to  
Newfoundland were using  
Lakota and finding relief for  
arthritis and joint pain.*

To make the ads, they went to a neighbour's farm, which had a nice, typical red barn. They convinced one of the early developers of Lakota products to be the TV spokesman. He was a real cowboy—not a person who plays a cowboy on TV. His cowboy hat goes with him wherever he goes. Having suffered some hearing loss as a child, he speaks with a slight acoustic irregularity. He was not an actor or professional spokesman: He was simply a regular person who worked with Lakota.

They set up the handy cam on a tripod and started taping. The script was put together with the goal of being as informative as it could be within the confines of television. The cowboy was not the commercial's only star: It co-starred the neighbour's horse. The horse wasn't the most cooperative co-star. It absolutely refused to stand still during shooting. Take after take was recorded and, in the end, one take stood out as the best. But it had a small problem: The horse started nibbling the cowboy's coat. The delivery of the lines, however, was perfect; so they used it for the final commercial, hungry horse and all.

The conventional strategy is to create a carefully researched and well-documented media plan before buying air time. Media plans often stipulate that ads should appear during popular shows—programs with high ratings and a large audience. The obvious downside of this media purchasing strategy, of course, is the extremely high cost of prime-time slots.

Don and Kent couldn't see a lot of value in paying extra for high-profile programming. Instead, they thought, why not advertise in a variety of shows, avoiding the expensive ones and keeping costs down? Also, unlike larger corporations, Lakota didn't need to have a media plan or advertising budget approved far in advance, so they could buy whatever was available at the last minute. TV advertising is perishable, like day-old bread, and unused air time goes on sale at the last minute. So Don and Kent bought up last-minute air time, and they weren't selective about programming. They bought early morning news, late-night movies,

The newsletter was working, so Don and Kent decided to broaden their message by creating television ads. And, of course, they did so in their own inimitable style. Relying on the strength of the message rather than flashy high-end techniques, they used their home video recorder to create their own now-famous commercials.



A television commercial featuring the Lakota cowboy—with a horse cameo.

and even shows with lousy ratings. The ads ran nationally on CBC and on The Weather Network. They saved huge amounts of money, buying so much air time that competitors assumed they were spending 10 times more than they actually spent.

The successful TV campaign was followed by a second national newspaper insert in October 2003: *Lakota Arthritis News* volume 2. Television is great for promoting your name and getting one simple message across, but Don and Kent knew that a widely distributed newsletter was still the only effective way to get detailed product information to millions of arthritis sufferers.

They knew they were onto something when *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* began to run spoofs of their ads. The CBC TV comedy show had a field day doing parodies of Lakota commercials in early 2004. Some business owners would probably have been offended, but Don

and Kent realized

what it really meant: Lakota had become a household name. *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* doesn't make fun of advertising no one has seen. Don and Kent also knew not to take themselves too seriously. Their ads were intentionally low budget; that was the point. They wanted to get the message to Canadians in the most economical way possible—they

*Why not advertise in a variety of shows, avoiding the expensive ones and keeping costs down?*

didn't set out to win advertising awards. And once the CBC started spoofing them, they were confident that the ads worked.

## **COSTCO BECOMES A CUSTOMER**

After seeing the product rocket to national success, Costco called. Don and Kent were initially hesitant to do business with Costco because people had said the company was difficult to work with. But they eventually made the move, and never regretted it. Costco continues to be a supportive partner today.

After a year of airing the television ads featuring their cowboy friend, Don and Kent wanted something different. They wanted to create a commercial that expressed the Native American heritage of the products. Through a friend, they contacted Floyd "Red Crow" Westermann. They thought that Floyd, a long-time Native American activist, would be the perfect spokesman.

Knowing that they would need a good-quality camera to record the commercial, they bought a used one on eBay and spent time learning how to use it. In July 2004, they packed up their gear and headed to Los Angeles, where Floyd lived. They rented a studio for a day, set up the camera and began shooting. They spent one day taping variations of the script they had written, filming hours of footage.

When they arrived home, they sat down with a film editor friend to edit the final commercial. When it was ready to air, they used the same strategy as before, buying air



*They knew they were on to something when This Hour Has 22 Minutes began to run spoofs of the Lakota TV ads.*



time many advertisers don't want. Sure, some of the ads came on at 3 a.m., but they also got last-minute deals for prime-time news and some major programming that hadn't sold out.

Soon afterwards, **Lakota Joint Care Roll-on** and **Joint Care Formula** capsules became the number one products in their respective categories. Don and Kent were thrilled, but they weren't content to stop there; they decided they needed another product.

So they developed **Arthritis Roll-on**, a capsaicin-based

product. Like **Joint Care Roll-on**, the **Arthritis Roll-on** uses natural capsaicin extract that Don and Kent had succeeded in sourcing—the key to the product's success. Synthetic capsaicin extract is what most products contain, but it doesn't have all four of capsaicin's molecular components that are essential for effective pain relief. Synthetic capsaicin is cheaper; but to make good products, you have to use good ingredients.



The other public face of Lakota: Floyd "Red Crow" Westermann, who appeared in various Lakota television spots.

## KENT TAKES ON IRONMAN

Don and Kent were not afraid of hard work or trying new things. Once Kent had fully recovered from his painful snowmobile injuries, he decided to get into shape. He had never been a runner, and the only biking he had done was as a child. He could barely swim. Nevertheless, he decided to race in a triathlon. He trained







A meeting of minds: Discussion and brainstorming at Lakota's offices.

long, and he needed a new challenge. He set his sights on a full Ironman: a 3.8 km swim, a 180 km bike and a 42 km run, one after the other. After completing his first full Ironman competition, Kent began to travel the world to compete in Ironman competitions, even going as far as China. It was this same type of sheer determination that made Lakota successful.

### FREE-SAMPLE FIASCO

A few months after the Floyd television ads aired, Lakota published a new issue of the *Lakota Arthritis News*. It was their most successful ad campaign yet. And, for the first time, it featured an offer for free samples—the response was huge. Thousands of free samples were sent out from the post office, packaged in regular envelopes. Each sample came in a small pouch—somewhat like a tea bag packet, but filled with a bit of Lakota rub. But eventually Don and Kent received a phone call from Canada Post. They were given a stern warning: Canada Post regulations did not permit liquid or gel samples to be sent by mail.

Don and Kent hadn't even thought to check. They assumed that as long as the product was not hazardous and the liquid pouch was well sealed, mailing it wouldn't be a problem. Of course, if Don and Kent had known everything they weren't supposed to do all along, Lakota would never have happened. You don't hear about success stories featuring corporate bureaucrats who say, "You can't do that!" Luckily, Don and Kent didn't have that problem—they just figured things out as they went along, doing what they thought was best.

### SPECIAL DELIVERY:TROUBLE

Admittedly, not having a big bureaucracy did cause a few snags. It wasn't only Canada Post that got upset about the free samples. According to federal regulations, you can't give Canadians free samples of natural health products. Health Canada was not amused.

Don and Kent had always been careful to ensure that they complied with Health Canada regulations, hiring expert consultants to be certain. And in every area of production—from raw materials to manufacturing to testing—Lakota far exceeded Health Canada requirements. But the free sample prohibition was something they

endlessly, pushing himself further and improving his technique. Eventually, he did it: He completed a triathlon. Then he decided to raise the bar, and set his sights on a bigger challenge: the Half Ironman.

A Half Ironman is 1.9 km of swimming, followed by 90 km of biking, followed by 21 km of running. Anyone who knows the demands of a Half Ironman knows that it takes years of training to reach that level of athletic performance. Kent completed his first Half Ironman before

were totally unaware of. Health Canada invited Lakota to a meeting in Vancouver, and two members of the Lakota management team made the trip for a 9 a.m. appointment the next day. Humour and confusion ensued: It was an all-too-perfect example of your typical farmers-in-the-big-city tale.

The Lakota team arrived at the Health Canada building, went to the designated floor and found the door to the regulatory office. They tried turning the door handle, but the door wouldn't budge—it seemed to be locked. Through a large window next to the door, they could see inside the regulatory office: Some people were already in the room. The Lakota managers assumed that the office just wasn't open yet; it was only 10 to nine.

They waited for awhile and tried the door again—still locked. They peeked through the window and saw a closed-circuit television screen on the wall, showing the two of them standing there. At 10 minutes past nine, they tried the door again: Still locked, yet still no one inside the room rose

to let them in. After another 10 minutes, they wondered if they had made a mistake about the meeting. They headed back to the car, and double-checked: It was indeed the right place and time.

They went back up, but still couldn't get in. A buzz of activity could now be heard from inside the room. Further down the hall, an unmarked door opened. Someone came out,

walked up to the locked door and—to their amazement—walked right in. The Lakota team was flabbergasted. They tried the door again: nothing. In frustration, they gave it a hard yank. And it swung open. When they walked in, every eye in the office was upon them. The office staff had had a great time watching the closed-circuit television, as the two Lakota managers tried, like chimps, to figure out how to open the “locked” door. The Health Canada inspector they were meeting could barely suppress his laughter. It all turned out well, and the jovial start to the meeting helped things go smoothly. The Lakota sample problem was ironed out without difficulty.

## LAKOTA BECOMES A HOUSEHOLD NAME

By now, Lakota was a high-profile name. The company was used in business schools as a case study; magazines, newspapers and TV programs called for interviews. Don



*Don and Kent wanted Lakota to be about the products, not about them.*



A helping hand: Lakota staff in Ontario for a charity event.



Lakota products being prepared and packaged for distribution.

and Kent, being farmers, were not used to the attention. They generally wanted Lakota to be about the products, not about them.

One program they did agree to was CBC Venture, a show featuring Canadian business success stories. Don and Kent had always liked the reporters on the program, and they couldn't believe that Venture was doing a story on Lakota. It meant that a longtime dream of theirs had come true: They had reached national success.

Of course, that meant that Lakota was attracting attention from large pharmaceuticals and investment bankers as well.

## **DECISION TIME: WHAT'S THE RIGHT MOVE?**

Corporations were putting a high value on Lakota, so Don and Kent agreed to meet with a representative from a well-known pharmaceutical company to discuss opportunities. During the meeting, the rep spoke cryptically about "strategic synergies" and "volumetric studies" and used other business buzzwords. By the end of the meeting, Don and Kent weren't even sure what he was talking about. Over the next few weeks, the pharmaceutical corporation finally said that it was interested in buying the Lakota company.

Don, Kent and some of their team flew to the corporation's Canadian headquarters for a meeting. They walked into a large lobby and called up to let their contact know they had arrived. As they waited, a female security guard with a strong German accent asked if they needed badges. They looked at each other in confusion, not understanding what she was saying. Their silence caused the woman at the reception to ask again in, German-tinged English, "You need badges?" "No," they answered, "I think we're OK." The security guard started making motions as if she were playing a guitar. "You singer?" she asked. Thinking they had misunderstood her, they asked again what she had said. "You country western singer?" she asked, strumming an air guitar again. Finally they understood; one of them was wearing a cowboy hat. Apparently, the only time they see cowboy hats in Toronto is when a country singer comes to town!

After making it past the security guard (who insisted they don badges), they met with the pharmaceutical company's head honchos. During phone calls the rep had promised big numbers. But when things became more serious, the honchos hedged. On top of that, the process required so many layers of bureaucracy that Don and Kent knew it would be a waste of their time. So they turned down the offer and went back to their focus, making the best natural pain relievers anywhere.

Also around this time, Wall Street and Bay Street banker types starting coming around, urging Don and Kent to take Lakota public. They talked about huge stakes. But both Don and Kent found the whole process distasteful. Going public would require a big chunk of money. Ultimately, they couldn't see how Lakota customers would benefit from it being a public company; the big winners would be the investment bankers.

### LAKOTA'S FANS MULTIPLY

By this time, Walmart's natural-health products buyer was a big fan of Lakota. He proposed that Lakota would be the Volume Producing Product of the year, which means that the whole Walmart company gets behind the product and pushes to make it successful. Walmart put in fixed end-aisle displays featuring Lakota and supported Lakota with ads and in-store features. Walmart had been another store that people had warned Don and Kent about, but, in the end, they found Walmart both helpful and easy to deal with.

Ever since the start of Lakota, customers has been writing letters to Don and Kent, describing how Lakota products changed their lives. The many letters were a constant source of encouragement. Some customers also requested new product features. One frequent request was for a softer roll-on applicator. Some people with arthritis in their hands found the roller too hard and said it was sometimes painful to use. Don and Kent set out to solve this problem. They exhaustively investigated different styles of soft sponge applicators and finally, in early 2005, they found just what they were looking for. The **Lakota Soft Touch** applicator was born.

### LAKOTA'S "FLIP 'N GRIP" LID INNOVATION

Another innovation that came to fruition around this time was the unique Lakota lid, which is now on all Lakota capsule bottles. It came about because some customers had trouble opening the lid on the original bottles. The plastic tear strip had to be pulled all the way around the rim of the lid and the lid flipped off using the tips of the fingers—not exactly an arthritis-friendly feature. Don and Kent knew they had to find a solution. They looked at stock lids from many different suppliers, but no one had what they were looking for. Once again it seemed that they would have to build something from scratch.

They worked with an industrial designer, explaining that they wanted a lid that had two main features. The lid had to be easy to turn, so it could be painlessly removed with arthritic hands; that meant the lid would have to have large knobby grips. They also wanted easy flip-open access, for those who find it easier to flip the lid open using the large tab. The name was catchy and obvious: the **"Flip 'n Grip"** lid. Arthritis sufferers across the country praised it as a wonderful innovation.

### COMMERCIAL APPEAL: CONSIDERING THE AD STRATEGY

When you become successful, people from all over come to sell you things. One of the groups that wanted to sell Lakota a "better way" was advertising agencies. A number of big agencies





came to Dawson Creek to pitch their advertising prowess. One made a particularly convincing pitch for a new set of ads. It was adamant that expensive television ads would propel Lakota sales through the roof. “If you can sell this much with home-made ads, imagine how much you could sell with professionally produced TV ads,” they argued.

Big agencies rely on market research, statistical reports and surveys—studies that treat people as numbers. But Don and Kent knew their customers face to face. They had talked with them on the phone and written them letters. And, most of all, they knew their customers because *they were their own best customers*.

*Ever since the start of Lakota, Don and Kent had received many letters from customers describing how Lakota products changed their lives. The letters were a constant source of encouragement.*

The professional TV campaign was a flop. A lot of money was spent making the slick ad using a standard media plan, but it didn’t work. Don and Kent had made the mistake of not following their gut instincts, instead listening to the advertising agencies. “They must know better, since they do this every day,” they thought. The mistake became another learning experience, and when young entrepreneurs ask for advice, Don and Kent always tell them to trust their instincts: Be self-reliant, and don’t let the experts tell you what can and can’t work.

## LAKOTA DECIDES TO TACKLE MORE PAIN PROBLEMS

By early 2007, Lakota was the leading natural pain reliever for arthritis. Don and Kent started working on developing a product specifically for back pain—one of the leading causes of lost work days in Canada. Addressing this problem could have a big impact on Canadians.

They decided on a two-pronged approach: a supplement and a roll-on pain reliever. The roll-on pain reliever would use the natural capsaicin extract used in other Lakota pain relievers, but the back pain roll-on would also have menthol as an extra pain-relieving enhancer. The menthol provides initial cool relief, while the capsaicin provides long-term pain reduction.

They called their pain-relieving tablets the **Triple Action Back Pain Formula**. The formula was based on extensive research into natural-source pain relievers. After tens of thousands of dollars and many months of research, they created a formula based on white willow bark, devil’s claw and natural-source muscle relaxants. A huge amount of resources was dedicated to researching this product, and it may be the best Lakota product yet! The two back-pain products, released in 2007, were a hit. By now, Lakota was well known and stores were eager to stock the new products. National distribution was nearly instantaneous.

And Lakota didn’t stop with back pain. Another common complaint from customers was that they had trouble getting a good night’s sleep when they were in pain. This led to the development of **Lakota PM**: a combination nighttime pain reliever/sleep aid.

Lakota had a huge impact in the arthritis and back pain areas, but there was another big group that needed relief—people with muscle pain. This was definitely an area where Lakota could make products better than the competition’s. Tweaking the natural capsaicin formula with some herbal extract, they developed a **Muscle Pain Roll-on**. It became the number-one bestseller in some stores; in fact, it is the *only* natural source muscle pain rub.

In 2011, Lakota tackled another type of pain. Diabetic nerve pain, one of the most debilitating types of pain, had a complete lack of natural-source options. The resulting product was a **Diabetic Foot Pain Cream**, which moisturizes while providing pain relief.

### **THE LAKOTA STORY CONTINUES**

Lakota is a success story in the best possible way: It has succeeded in helping countless people to deal with pain, improve the quality of their lives, and get back to the important things. And the team at Lakota didn't succeed by changing who they are or what they stood for: They did things their own way, and showed everyone that with a good product, commitment, and a lot of hard work, anything is possible.

What will the future hold for Lakota and its line of products? No secrets will be revealed here. But there is no doubt that Lakota will continue to be the natural remedy that people reach for, the one they tell their friends about—"You have to try it, it really works!"—and the one they trust. The Lakota story continues.