



# Muscle Activation Therapy

"The Power of Pain-Free Living - Bridging the Gap  
between Fitness and Rehabilitation"

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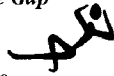
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BODY LANGUAGE | Linda Buch

## How to fight chronic pain

**Q:** I have terrible chronic back and neck pain. I have taken pills, done massage therapy and even surgery. What do you know about the Egoscue method?

— Margaret Carhardt,  
Denver

**A:** Chronic pain, defined as "continuous pain lasting more than six months," often arises from a condition that remains untreated for too long. Ignoring pain is always unwise because it is your body's primary means of communication when something is amiss. Simply taking pain-killers daily is just shooting the messenger.

Chronic-pain specialist Dr. Martin D. Hoffman, with the Medical College of Wisconsin and Froedtert Hospital, believes the best results can be achieved through a multidisciplinary approach. A typical team might include a physical therapist, occupational therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist, nurse, anesthesiologist and exercise specialist.

Many specialists recommend exercise because it releases endorphins, a natural pain reliever. Hoffman became a strong advocate of exercise after finding that patients with chronic back pain felt significantly better after 25 minutes of riding an exercise bike. Exercise also promotes better sleep and reduces the anxiety and depression that often come with chronic pain.

Other avenues recommended by pain sufferers are Egoscue and Muscle Activation Technique (MAT). Both

are similar in that they look at the body as a systemic whole, recognizing that when one area is harmed, the whole organism is affected. While conventional therapies focus primarily on the area in pain and treat from that perspective, both MAT and Egoscue focus on correcting muscle imbalances that interfere with proper movement and function.

According to [www.egoscue.com](http://www.egoscue.com), "The Egoscue Method provides personalized exercises that retrain muscles, realign posture, and reduce pain." (Information can be found at 800-995-8434.)

MAT ([www.muscleactivation.com](http://www.muscleactivation.com), 877-999-9628) promotes itself as "bridging the gap between fitness and rehabilitation." MAT-trained therapists, working one-on-one, examine joint function to find the muscles that are not responding properly (which forces the body to compensate) and restore the proper neurological connection.

A MAT session determines which muscles are not supporting the body properly and then "jump-starts" them through isometric exercises or palpitation, restoring their ability to function more effectively.

Both of these methods have gained support from professional athletes and average folks alike.

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