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Alexander technique does help back pain

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LONDON | Wed Aug 20, 2008 8:25am BST

(Reuters) - Chronic back pain can be eased by teaching the Alexander technique, an alternative therapy involving better posture, researchers said on Wednesday.

The technique was originally developed at the end of the 19th century by the Shakespearean actor Frederick Alexander. It teaches correct posture and is designed to align muscles in the head, neck and back.

Until now, there has been no real evidence of the long-term benefits of the Alexander technique, although previous research has suggested it may offer short-term relief.

To find out more, a team of researchers from the University of Southampton and the University of Bristol compared the effectiveness of different therapies in more than 500 patients.

After a year of treatment, patients receiving 24 Alexander technique lessons reported experiencing just three days of back pain, compared to 21 days for those given normal care by their doctor, they wrote in the online edition of the British Medical Journal.

Back pain causes more disability than almost any other condition in Western societies but very few effective long-term treatments are available.

(Reporting by [Ben Hirschler](#), editing by Mary Gabriel)

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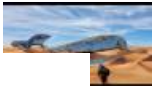
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