

A Summary of the Hungarian Spine Society's Prevention Program

(For more information please go to

<https://ogk.hu/en/medical-services/prevention/primary-prevention-of-degenerative-diseases-of-the-spine/>)

The Importance of a Prevention Program

The physically inactive, sedentary lifestyle of today's children and young adults has become so prevalent that 50% to 60% of their number now have bad posture, which, due to the resulting improper muscle balance and overloading of the spine, will very likely turn into discopathy as adults. The only possibility for prevention is daily physical education and, within that, regularly performed special posture correction exercises for all school-children.

To improve the children's chance for a healthy life, the Hungarian Spine Society launched its Prevention Program in 1995 with two goals: that schools offer daily physical education (DPE) classes and teach special posture correction exercises to every student in DPE.

This concept is also supported by the latest international medical literature (Burton AK et al: European guidelines for prevention in low back pain, 2004, www.backpaineurope.org).

The Essence of the Prevention Program

A. Posture Correction

Physical education teachers are shown the special posture correction exercises to be taught to all school children (preferably also kindergartners) as part of their physical education throughout their school-aged years in order to prevent adult discopathy. The exercises were designed to automatize and maintain the muscle balance responsible for posture and to develop the correct mid-position of the pelvis.

B. Daily Physical Education Classes

As a result of many battles fought together with several medical societies, daily physical education classes were integrated into the National Health Program (2001, 2003). The Ministry of Health called for a tender in 2001 with our help wherein the large number (710 schools) of applicants proved that the schools can provide daily physical education for all the children when given the necessary resources.

Program Results

- A. The exercise material was included in the National Core Curriculum, in the physical education curriculum framework, made part of the qualification requirements as well as part of the objectives and actions of the National Health Program. As a result of continued government support during the years 1995-2004, the physical education teachers who learned the posture correction exercises were given the introductory exercise booklet and DVD free of charge. By January 2004, a total of 7,772 physical education teachers teaching in 3,715 schools had become familiar with the posture correcting exercises. A total of 51,475 functional muscle tests conducted by the physical education teachers on 32,831 students revealed that only 11% of the children had the muscle balance necessary for supporting correct posture. In the remainder of the children, the posture supporting muscles were weakened and/or shortened.

The efficacy of the special posture correction exercises as part of their physical education was confirmed on several occasions through controlled and prospective examinations.

(Somhegyi A., Tóth J., Makszin I., Gardi Zs., Feszthammer A., Darabosné Tim I., Tóthné Steinhausz V., Tóthné Szabó K., Varga P.: Primary prevention program of the Hungarian Spine Society II – Controlled prospective study of short term efficacy. English abstract. *Ideggyógyászati Szemle/Clin Neurosci* 2005; 58/5-6/:177-182.
Somhegyi A., Lazáry Á., Feszthammer A., Darabosné Tim I., Tóthné Steinhausz V., Boja S., Szilágyi Á., Varga P.: Application of special exercises in physical education to develop, automatize and maintain the biomechanically correct posture. English abstract. *Népegészségügy* 2014; 92:11-19.)

- B. Daily physical education became part of the government program of 2010 and, on the basis of the national education law accepted in December, 2011, its gradual implementation started in September, 2012. The National Core Curriculum newly drafted in 2012, emphasizes to a much greater extent the necessity for posture correction (in addition to several other health promotion criteria). The professional review (subject monitoring and supervision of subject matter) terminated in 1985 will again, at last, be reintroduced.

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