

The first thing you must remember is that the situation is not hopeless. The human body has a remarkable ability to heal itself, as does the mind.

Next, you must decide that you will make a serious attempt at Dr. Sarno's technique. The technique only works for people who make a serious and determined effort to apply it. You must either believe that it can work for you, or you must be so desperate that you will try hard even if you don't believe in it. If you make a casual or half-hearted attempt you are not likely to succeed. But a serious, determined effort will work.

I did not believe in it when I first read the book. My nature is very skeptical; I didn't believe in curative mental powers, and I had given up on miracles. However I was desperate. I was in constant pain. My life consisted of standing up to do what little work I could, and laying on a mat on the floor at home the rest of the day. So even though I didn't think it would work, my wife convinced me to try.

Now you must make a commitment to try the book's approach. You must be willing to spend some time on it every day for at least a month, maybe longer. You might as well try – what have you got to lose? I don't think there is one exact way to do it, but I will tell you what worked for me and recommend that you try it.

1. Read about 30 pages of the book every day. Don't just go over the words -- think about them! Pay attention to what he says, and think about how it applies to you. It's easy to be inattentive – especially after multiple readings -- so force yourself to concentrate on the ideas. Be especially attentive when you see points that remind you of yourself. Also, keep reminding yourself that the people described in the book had problems similar to yours, and they were cured. When you finish reading the book, start it again the next day. You must read it continuously for a month or more. And you must pay attention every time you read it.

2. Set aside time every day to think about what problems might be bothering you -- what might be in your life and in your mind that is causing your back (or other) trouble. Spend at least 30 minutes every day thinking about this. I used to take 15 minutes in the morning when I first got up, and then 30 minutes in the evening. Use this time for the following:

Think about everything that might possibly bother you – work, school, or home pressures, family responsibilities, financial matters, relationships, etc. Be as specific as possible. You cannot simply say "I'm worried about money" -- that isn't enough. You must try to identify every specific item you can think of. I found it necessary to write lists to keep track. I know others who have written in narrative form. Either way, when you are very specific you can think of a lot of things.

Pay attention to all areas of your life, big and little. Consider not only the obvious problems, but try to speculate about hidden things too. Consider both the real and imagined things that might be troubling you.

Once you have identified your problems, divide them into two categories: those that you can do something about, and those that are beyond your control. Be realistic about where each one fits.

Next, start taking action on the ones you can do something about. Do whatever you can to correct them, or try to at least. The ones you have no control over, tell yourself that you know they bother you but you must accept them -- and *most important*, you will not let them cause you any more pain. Remember, you don't have to eliminate your problems for the cure to work; you just have to be aware

of the process. When I went through both the pain and the cure, nothing significantly changed in my life – only how I dealt with it.

Think about your personality -- what is it in you that lets these problems create such pain. The typical Sarno type is perfectionist, easily angered or irritated, highly motivated, high-achiever, approval-seeking, somewhat compulsive, and impatient with other people. Those are the parts of my personality that led my mind to develop back pain. However, there are other types that get it. One of my co-workers was a happy, easy-going, very pleasant woman, but she got back pain as bad as mine, and the book cured her too. (It took her about three months, by the way, but she has been perfectly healthy for over a decade.) Try to learn what is inside your mind that needs that physical distraction. What permits the pain to develop and persist? Be honest about yourself. Again, remember that you don't have to change your personality for the cure to work -- you just have to understand and fight it.

3. All day long, keep reminding yourself of the whole process.

Whenever a problem occurs, think "Okay, I don't like that, but I'm not going to let it go to my back (or wherever) and cause pain."

Whenever you feel back pain (or if you are like I was and it hurts all the time, whenever it feels especially bad), think "My back is acting up, what is going on in my life or in my mind to make it hurt."

4. After you have worked on the above for a month or so, start to take small steps to test your progress. Don't do too much too soon. Just look for tiny improvements, find something you can do that doesn't hurt quite as much as it used to. Go slowly, but after a little more time you will notice your back is a little better. Build on the small steps -- the slightest improvement is a sign that the process is working, and that should encourage you to stick with it.

5. Don't give up. I know how depressing and discouraging it is, but there is hope. In order for it to work you simply must put in the time and effort to make it work.