

WHY CHRONIC PAIN DEMANDS A FULL-BODY SOLUTION



The integrated health
approach *that works*
when nothing else has



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Welcome!

If you've been living with ongoing pain – such as lower back pain, neck pain, or other chronic discomfort – you're not alone. In fact, research shows that over 40% of adults over the age of 40 experience some form of chronic pain. *(Source: CDC, 2022 Chronic Pain Report)*

And the problem is only getting worse.

As humans, we are designed to move. Not just for an hour in the gym – but to be non-sedentary for up to 9 hours per day through daily activities. Yet today, the majority of people spend most of their waking hours sitting. This has a profound effect on our health.

Movement isn't just about burning calories, it's how our body:

- Stimulates healthy blood flow
- Triggers waste elimination
- Powers our lymphatic system
- Maintains spinal health and flexibility
- Supports digestion and mental clarity

Without movement, the body stagnates. Muscles tighten. Spinal discs dehydrate. Organs function less efficiently. And recovery from pain and injury slows dramatically.

But it doesn't stop there. Clinical experience also shows that over 90% of people have some form of faulty breathing pattern. This hidden dysfunction contributes to:

- Increased spinal degeneration
- Chronic fatigue and low energy
- Anxiety and depression
- Poor gut health and inflammation

(Later in this guide, I'll show you how you can self-assess your breathing pattern!)

If you're like most people who seek medical care, you may have experienced only short-term relief – and felt the frustration when symptoms return again and again.

It's not your fault.

The truth is:

A chronic problem can never be truly solved with a few 20-minute adjustments or a prescription. It requires a completely different approach.

What's becoming clear in modern health science is this:

Chronic pain demands a fully integrated, whole-body solution.

Why? Because when a health issue is ignored or only partially treated, the body adapts and compensates. A lower back injury doesn't stay "just" a back problem – it leads to postural shifts, breathing dysfunctions, gut stress, and even neck and jaw issues. Without understanding the whole system, it's impossible to solve the root cause. Manual therapies can help

temporarily and medication can mask symptoms but true, lasting relief comes only by addressing:

- Structural alignment
- Core stability
- Breathing mechanics
- Gut health
- Nervous system balance.

This guide is here to introduce you to a different path:

An Integrated Health System that looks at your whole body, your real needs, and your long-term healing.

Let's get started.

1. It's not about "perfect posture". It's about functional, pain-free alignment

Let's get one thing straight from the beginning:

Nobody (not even top athletes or health professionals) has perfect posture all the time. And that's not the goal.

What is essential is developing a functional posture – one that's free from pain, allows your body to move efficiently, and protects your spine and joints from wearing down too early.



So... what happens when you hear the word posture?

Do you sit up straighter?

Most people do. But how long can you hold it before you slouch again? That's not because you're lazy. It's not a willpower problem.

It's because the muscles responsible for good posture – your deep

stabilizers – have likely been neglected for years.

These are predominantly Type 1 muscle fibers, designed for endurance, not strength. You can't train them with the same exercises you'd use for biceps or glutes. They require:

- Specific techniques
- Calculated intensity
- Long-duration activation

In short, they need a strategy. And unfortunately, that's not what you'll find in most gyms, Pilates studios, or even traditional physical therapy.

Posture is personal. One size does not fit all

Every body is different. There's no universal "perfect" posture.

That's why at the CHEK Institute, the very first thing we assess is a person's natural spinal alignment, from head to toe.

We use an integrated screening process that measures:

- Degree of sway in your spinal curves
- How your head, shoulders, hips, and pelvis align
- Where your muscles are under- or over-engaged

Because when your spine is out of alignment – your whole body compensates. That's often where pain begins.

Why functional posture matters more than you think

- ✓ It improves your breathing
- ✓ It supports proper oxygenation and circulation
- ✓ It reduces spinal wear and tear
- ✓ It helps your Cerebrospinal Fluid move and lubricate your spinal discs
- ✓ It reduces fatigue and the risk of injury
- ✓ It even affects your mood and how people perceive you

Your posture literally changes how your brain functions – and how confident, energized, and pain-free you feel. Imagine being able to:



*Walk, sit, and
move without
aching joints*

*Play with your
kids or grandkids
without paying
for it later*



*Walk into a room
with relaxed
confidence and
zero stiffness*

That's what functional alignment offers. And why this screen exists.

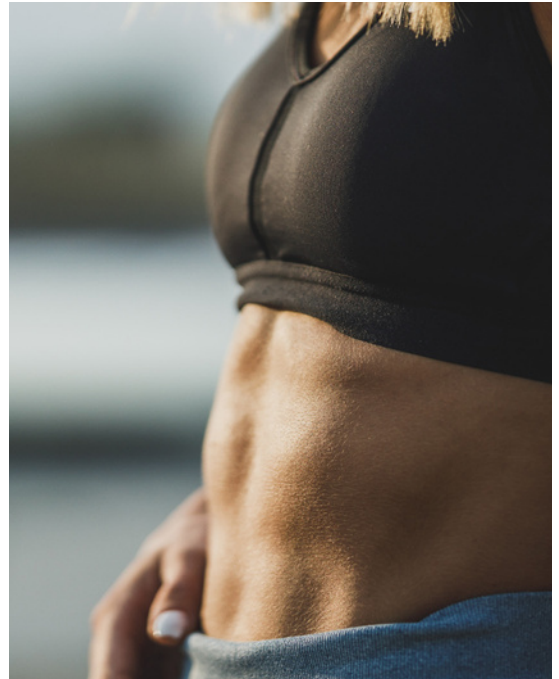
In the CHEK Integrated Wellness Screen, we don't guess, we measure. We start with your structure, because that's what everything else in your body is built on.

2. Your Core: It's not about six-pack abs, it's about protecting your health

When you hear the word core or core training, what image pops into your mind? Chances are, it's the famous "six-pack" – tight, sculpted abs like you see on magazine covers.

But here's the truth:

The visible six-pack (the Rectus Abdominis) is NOT your real core stabilization system. In fact, it's often part of the problem.



The Rectus Abdominis is part of what we call the Outer Unit – important for movement and strength – but it's not built to stabilize and protect your spine at rest. Worse yet, over training this muscle (which is extremely common) often leads to:

- Poor posture
- Increased spinal pressure
- Reduced breathing efficiency
- Higher risk of injuries

Focusing on just "abs" without understanding the true core can actually make things worse over time.

What your body really needs: the Inner Unit

Your Inner Unit is your body's deep stabilizing system – the true foundation for pain-free movement and long-term spinal health.

It includes:

- Transversus Abdominis - Your body's natural "corset." It wraps around from your lower spine to your pelvis and rib cage, providing critical stability before you even move. It also holds your organs in place and supports your hips, neck, arms, and legs.

Shocking fact: In testing, less than 10% of people activate this muscle properly – even among professional athletes!

- Pelvic Floor - Yes, men have one too! It works together with the Transversus Abdominis to stabilize the pelvis and protect internal structures. Dysfunction here can contribute to pelvic instability, low back pain, and even gluteal changes known as "Heart Bottom Syndrome."
- Internal Obliques - Critical muscles for rotational stability. Most spinal disc injuries occur during twisting or bending, and these muscles are a major part of your defense.
- Multifidus - Tiny, powerful muscles that cross each segment of your spinal column, stabilizing your vertebrae and allowing safe, controlled movement .
- Diaphragm - More than just a breathing muscle! The diaphragm also plays a key role in spinal stabilization and helps "pump" and support your digestive organs.

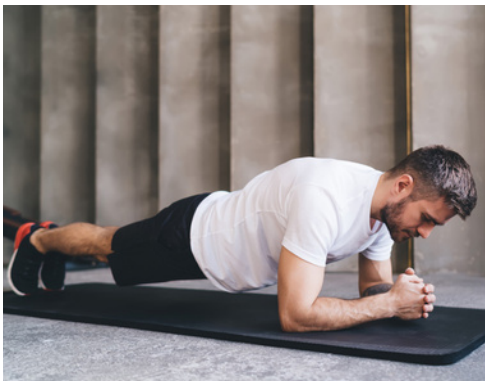
Why you may be struggling (without even realizing it)

Here's what most fitness programs (and even some therapies) miss:



Crunches and sit-ups?

✗ They mostly train the Outer Unit.



Planks?

Helpful, but don't automatically activate the full Inner Unit system.



Pilates?

Can help. But without precise assessment and correction, most people still compensate.

And remember: If you've ever had abdominal surgery – like a C-section or appendix removal – those scars can interrupt activation of your core muscles, making true stabilization even harder.

The good news?

With the right assessment and targeted conditioning plan, even deeply dysfunctional core systems can be awakened and rebuilt. Many people experience huge improvements in just a few weeks!

A properly functioning Inner Unit means:

- Less pain
- Better posture
- Stronger, safer movement
- Improved digestion
- Better energy and confidence

And it's one of the *first* things a skilled Integrated Health Professional will look at. Because it's the foundation for everything that follows.



But true core function goes far beyond simply training the muscles. If what lies beneath the core – your gut health – isn't optimized, even the best-designed core program from a CHEK Practitioner will struggle to succeed.

That's why understanding your gut is the next essential piece of the puzzle.

3. Gut health, core stability, and the hidden link to chronic pain

Have you ever noticed that your belly seems to get bigger or more bloated as the day goes on? Or maybe you've wondered whether your persistent gut issues (IBS, constipation, excessive gas) could be connected to your pain or posture problems?

If so, you're definitely not alone.



It's now estimated that over 60% of people over the age of 40 suffer from some form of digestive dysfunction on a regular basis.

(Source: NIH Digestive Diseases Statistics)

But here's where it gets interesting, and critically important:

Your gut health and your spinal stability are deeply connected.

How gut inflammation weakens your core (without you realizing)

Let's go back to what you learned about the true core muscles: your Transversus Abdominis (TVA), pelvic floor, internal obliques, and diaphragm.

These deep stabilizers sit over and around your internal organs. Every time your small intestine becomes inflamed – whether from food sensitivities, poor digestion, or stress – that inflammation creates swelling and pressure against these core muscles.

What happens next?

- The core muscles stretch.
- They loosen.
- They lose their ability to protect your spine.

Now imagine that happening 5-10 times a day. Every time you eat foods your gut struggles to process, or when stress spikes your inflammatory response.

Over time, this constant low-level assault can create what many recognize as the “pooch belly” appearance. Your core can no longer hold the viscera (internal organs) snugly in place, and gravity pulls them forward and down.

This isn't just cosmetic – it's also a major factor in pelvic instability, back pain, and even hernias.

Research: Lammers et al., 2007. “Association of Connective Tissue Laxity with Inguinal Hernias.”

The pain pathway you've never heard of

It gets even more fascinating (and critical).

Every time your intestines are inflamed, they send pain signals back to your brain. But here's the kicker: the same nerve pathways that transmit gut pain also serve your lower back.

This is called a viscerosomatic reflex.

Gut inflammation literally “tricks” your brain into interpreting gut pain as lower back pain.

 This means your back might hurt even when your spine is technically fine, because the real issue is gut-related.

Why so many therapies fail (and why CHEK Practitioners think differently)

This explains why:

- Adjustments may help, but the pain keeps coming back.
- Massages bring relief, but it fades.
- Exercises strengthen the outer muscles, but don't fix the real problem.

Unless the gut is addressed along with core stability and postural correction, true healing remains out of reach.

That's why at the CHEK Practitioner level, we don't guess. We use:

- Core function testing (non-invasive, simple)
- Detailed dietary and lifestyle questionnaires
- Stress and breathing assessments

Because often, what's happening inside is just as important as what we see on the outside.

And sometimes, it all starts with something as simple as how you breathe. But more on that in the next section...

4. Breathing, Mood, and Movement: the most overlooked key to pain and health

By now, it's becoming clear: Chronic back pain is never *just* a back problem.

It's simply not possible. So why do so many treatments isolate it as if it were?

Long-term, "unexplained" issues—whether it's knee pain, shoulder pain, or neck pain – are nearly always connected to weak core stability, gut dysfunction, and yes...faulty breathing mechanics.

Idiopathic Pain: what it really means

If you've ever been told you have "idiopathic pain," it means the doctor or therapist doesn't know what's causing it.

Idiopathic is a medical term meaning "of unknown origin."

But here's the truth: In the vast majority of cases, the body *is* giving signals. They've just been overlooked, disconnected, or treated in isolation.

How faulty breathing keeps you in pain

In my years of assessing clients as an Integrated Health Professional, I've learned one thing: Breathing mechanics are often the single biggest overlooked cause of dysfunction.

I've seen clients reduce pain, improve digestion, increase energy, and even regulate mood – simply by correcting how they breathe.

So let's test your breathing *right now*.



Self-Test: Are You Breathing Correctly?

1. Stand up (ideal), or sit upright. Lying down is also okay.
2. Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly button.
3. Take 10 normal breaths in and out. No over-exaggerating, just breathe naturally.

Now observe:

Which hand moved first?

Which hand moved the most?

Did only one hand do most of the work?

Hold onto those answers, we'll come back to them shortly.

The role of the Diaphragm: your internal powerhouse

Your diaphragm isn't just for breathing. It's one of the most powerful core stabilization and organ support muscles in your body. It helps:

- Pump Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF) to nourish and lubricate the spine
- Create internal pressure to stabilize your pelvis and spine
- Massage your internal organs and promote waste elimination
- Keep your nervous system regulated and calm

In fact, nearly all clients I've seen with chronic constipation also show dysfunctional breathing mechanics. Coincidence? Not at all.

So... why don't we breathe properly?

There are many reasons, and they tend to stack up:

- Food intolerances can cause blocked sinuses, leading to mouth breathing
- Poor posture – especially forward head position from phones and screens – compresses the diaphragm and reduces lung expansion
- Overuse of crunches or sit-ups. They stress the diaphragm and restrict natural breathing mechanics
- And the big one: Stress



Stress and the breath

Think of a time you felt anxious, angry, or overwhelmed. What happened to your body?

- Shoulders tensed
- Stomach tightened
- Breathing became shallow or rapid

That's your body's survival response.

When stress hits, your posture collapses into a defensive position, and your breathing shifts from diaphragmatic (calm, full) to shallow, chest-dominant breathing.

Over time, this becomes your default.

And this, right here, is one of the key links between:

- Poor spinal support
- Reduced digestion
- Anxiety and mental fatigue
- Long-term inflammation and pain

Breathing isn't just about getting air in. It's about how your body functions at every level.

Now, back to your test...

Which hand moved first? Was it your chest or your belly?

If your chest hand moved first, or did most of the work, this indicates a likely breathing dysfunction.

Don't worry, you're not alone. Research shows that over 90% of people breathe inefficiently, and most don't even know it.

The good news? It's one of the easiest and most effective things to assess and correct, once you know where to start.

Next, we'll introduce the bigger picture and show you how posture, core function, gut health, and breathing all come together. So you can finally see the full map of your health.

5. Why symptom-based treatments often fail – and what it really takes to heal

Before we go any further, let's make something clear: Manual therapists (such as chiropractors and physical therapists) are incredible medical professionals.

Many CHEK Practitioners regularly refer to them when a client is in acute pain from a recent injury or when a medical issue needs to be addressed first .

But when it comes to chronic pain and long-term health struggles, a different approach is often needed. That's where Integrated Health comes in.

What Is an Integrated Health Professional?



As a CHEK Practitioner, I work with clients on far more than just musculoskeletal issues. We go beyond “where it hurts” to address why the pain started – and how to build a lifestyle that supports long-term freedom from it.

Being an Integrated Health Professional means taking into account:

- Past medical history
- Current medications
- Movement and posture patterns
- Nutrition and digestion
- Stress and emotional load
- Daily habits, work environment, and mindset.

But most importantly, we ask the one question that changes everything:
What do *you* want?

Most people start with answers like:

“I just want to get out of pain” or “I want to feel better again”

That’s valid, but it’s just the beginning.

We want to know:

What happens next when you *are* out of pain?

What does your life *look like* then?

What do you want to do, experience, or become?

Because when we understand your true goal – your emotional driver –
we can help you build a body and a lifestyle that actually supports it.

For example:

- Playing with your children or grandchildren without fear of triggering another painful episode
- Returning to golf, tennis, hiking, or workouts, without hesitation

- Simply walking or standing for long periods without thinking about your body
- Walking your daughter down the aisle without pretending you're not in pain.

What's your version of that?

Once we understand your story and your “why” – we begin the process of putting it all together.

The CHEK Approach: Assess, Design, Coach

We don't treat symptoms.

We don't guess.

And we don't apply one-size-fits-all protocols.

We start with our Integrated Health Assessment System, where we evaluate:

- Your spinal alignment
- Your core function
- Your breathing patterns
- Your digestive and inflammatory load
- Your physical stressors and lifestyle choices

From there, we design a truly unique program built specifically for you. And then we begin the real work: coaching you toward your long-term health vision.

How long will it take?

Most of our clients work with us for about 12 months, but we offer 3 month and 6 month options also. Most clients stay at least 12 months, Not because it takes that long to reduce pain – many clients feel significantly better within a few short weeks. But because we're not interested in short-term fixes. And THEY love the service we provide. We're here to guide deep, sustainable change.

All our CHEK Packages include:

- ✓ A thorough Musculoskeletal assessment using the CHEK System of analysis.
- ✓ Detailed Lifestyle assessments
- ✓ A Comprehensive designed integrated health Plan
- ✓ A step-by-step realignment of the body from years (or decades) of dysfunction
- ✓ Dietary changes that reduce systemic inflammation and improve gut health
- ✓ Corrective movement and core reconditioning
- ✓ Stress reduction and nervous system support
- ✓ Functional movement coaching for real-world strength and confidence
- ✓ Emotional support and health mindset coaching through every phase

We coach in both gym settings and in 1:1 consultation sessions covering every aspect of your wellbeing.

What do clients experience?

Many of our clients report a sense of wellbeing after just 6-8 weeks. But by 12 months, they say something different altogether:

“Now I finally know what health is supposed to feel like.”

Not a quick fix. Not a Band-Aid. But a complete transformation – one built on science, coaching, and a true partnership in health.



6. Where do you start?

The first step toward your health transformation

Many of our clients first come to us through a referral. They've seen someone they know – a friend, a family member, a colleague –experience incredible, life-changing results. And they want that for themselves.

We love referrals. There's no greater compliment. But if you don't yet know someone who's worked with a CHEK Practitioner, don't worry. We've created two clear, accessible ways for you to experience what we do firsthand and see if it's the right fit for you.

- 1 The CHEK Integrated Wellness Screen™ - 30 minutes
- 2 A 45-Minute Consultation - this is free following your 30 minute Integrated Wellness Screen

1 The CHEK Integrated Wellness Screen™ (30 minutes)

This is our most popular entry point. We run these as special events at set intervals throughout the year. They're open to everyone – and designed to give you a snapshot of your current health and function, in just 30 minutes. These are paid appointments and booking is essential due to limited availability.

During your 30-minute session, we'll assess:

- ✓ Your breathing mechanics
- ✓ Core function and engagement
- ✓ Spinal alignment
- ✓ Pelvic and head position
- ✓ Overall posture
- ✓ Basic lifestyle and gut health indicators



You'll receive:

- A brief verbal summary of your results at the end of the appointment
- A follow-up Report of Findings emailed to you
- A clear explanation of your next best steps, tailored to your situation

This screen is a powerful first glimpse into how CHEK Practitioners approach health – and how much can be revealed with the right lens. Following your screen, you'll also have the option to schedule a full, free consultation to go deeper.

2 45-minute consultation

If you're ready to have a real conversation about your health, following your 30 minute CHEK Integrated Wellness Screen you can book a free sit-down consultation with a CHEK Practitioner.

There are no assessments during this session. Instead, we'll:

- ✓ Get clear on your health history and current challenges
- ✓ Understand your goals and what's been holding you back
- ✓ Outline the specific approach we would take if we were to work together
- ✓ Answer your questions and explore whether Integrated Health Coaching is the right path for you

If it feels like the right fit (and we have space to take on new clients), we'll arrange your initial assessments and begin your journey from there.

! Please note: A full CHEK Assessment typically takes between 2-3 hours, and is one of the most detailed and thorough evaluations available in the field of integrated health.

Ready to take the first step?

Use the QR code below to find the next available CHEK Integrated Wellness Screen™ in your area.

Whichever path you choose, this could be the beginning of the healthiest, most empowered phase of your life.



Scan this QR code to book your
30 minute CHEK Integrated
Wellness Screen™

Meet your CHEK Practitioner

This is your personal connection point – the practitioner who will guide you through your screen, assessment, and coaching journey.



Nisha Srivastava

Nisha is a certified Level 3 CHEK Practitioner and Holistic Lifestyle Coach with a deep specialisation in spine care and chronic back pain.

With a background in dance, yoga, and Pilates, she integrates movement wisdom with advanced corrective exercise and lifestyle coaching to help her clients achieve lasting relief and full-body resilience.

Nisha is passionate about helping adults over 40 overcome chronic pain, restore functional movement, and reconnect with their bodies. Her approach is rooted in the CHEK Method—a comprehensive, systems-based model that transformed her own life after years of struggling with weight gain, poor posture, and unresolved gut health issues, acne that conventional medicine failed to address.

Her philosophy is grounded in compassion, consistency, and a healthy dose of humour—believing these to be essential for healing and personal growth. Nisha works closely with individuals who are committed to meaningful, lasting change rather than short-term fixes. Her process is deeply personal, thorough, and informed by detailed assessments and coaching practices.

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Your next step starts now

I hope you've enjoyed this guide and, more importantly, that it's given you something of value.

Maybe a new insight into your pain.

Maybe a moment of clarity.

Or maybe... the spark to take back control of your health.

If it's inspired you, even in a small way, I'm grateful.

You're not alone – even if it's felt that way

Wherever you are in your journey right now, I want you to know: You are not broken. You haven't "failed." And you are absolutely not alone.

Most of the people I work with have been through it:

- Quick fixes that didn't last
- Treatment plans that only scratched the surface
- Doctors or trainers who didn't listen or connect the dots.

The truth is, the traditional system just isn't built to address the full picture of your health. That's why Integrative Health Coaching is growing. And why I do what I do.

Why our approach works

What makes our approach different is simple: We don't treat parts. We support the whole person.

We don't just work with:

- Core strength
- Back pain
- Gut health
- Stress
- Breathing
- Posture
- Diet

We work with all of it, because your body is a whole system. And when it's approached that way, everything starts to change.

Let's meet

If this message resonates with you, here's how we can connect:

Attend a [CHEK Integrated Wellness Screen™](#)

Experience a 30-minute screen that will help you understand your body like never before.

You'll get immediate insights + a full report of findings and recommendations.



Final thoughts

You've waited long enough already.

Life is too precious to live it in pain, limitation, or confusion.

Let's build the foundation for a stronger, clearer, and pain-free future – together.

Looking forward to meeting you soon,

NishaSrivastava

Licensed CHEK Practitioner | Integrated Health Professional

Learn more about the CHEK Approach and CHEK training at chekinstitute.com