

Breaking 25 Years of Back Pain:

How I Reclaimed My Life and Walked 10,000 Steps at My Granddaughter's Graduation

I've struggled with back problems for more than **25 years**.

When I look back, it's really no surprise. I've spent my entire life on my feet. I've been a hairdresser for more than **50 years**, and over the years I've also worked in restaurants, at gas stations in the food department, as a crossing guard, cleaning homes, and helping in my dad's taverns. I lived on a farm, did a lot of heavy lifting, and later cared for my parents. My whole life has been **go, go, go**.

Eventually, all that physical strain caught up to me.

As the years went by, my pain just kept getting worse. I had neck pain, shoulder pain, low back pain, pain in my butt, and sometimes my legs even felt weak. I could barely walk or stand up straight. Going up and down steps was difficult. Kneeling was impossible. Getting up after sitting hurt, and eventually it became so uncomfortable to lie down that I slept in a recliner for the last **five years**.

I was frustrated because I couldn't do the things I wanted to do anymore. I never liked talking about my aches and pains. I just kept pushing through them and tried to keep going as best I could.

Over the years I tried just about everything. I went to chiropractors, had injections, physical therapy, dry needling, acupuncture—even nerve ablation. Unfortunately, nothing gave me lasting relief.

For years I had been reading patient success stories from the Wisconsin Spine & Chiropractic Center in the newspaper. I actually knew several of the people who had shared their stories, including one lady I've known for decades and still sit near at church.

But even after reading all those stories, I still didn't make an appointment.

Then one day, while waiting in another doctor's office, I struck up a

conversation with a complete stranger. As we talked, I told her everything I was dealing with. She smiled and said she had experienced many of the very same problems. Then she looked at me and said, "**You need to go see Dr. Kroneck.**"



When I left that appointment, I immediately scheduled my first visit.

By the time I came in, I could barely walk. Steps were difficult. I couldn't kneel, and I'd been sleeping in a recliner for five years because I couldn't lie comfortably in bed anymore. Even my kids kept telling me, "**Mom, you've got to do something.**"

During my examination they took X-rays, and I honestly couldn't believe what I saw.

When Dr. Kroneck showed me my neck and back on the X-rays, I was shocked. I had no idea my spine looked that bad. It was unbelievable to actually see it with my own eyes. My kids were with me that day, and after seeing the X-rays, they were convinced I really needed help too.

I told Dr. Kroneck that my biggest goal was simple: **I wanted to be able to walk at my granddaughter's graduation at UW–Madison.**

Today, my life is so much different.

I'm standing much straighter. My balance is better. Walking is easier, and stairs are no longer such a struggle. It's easier getting in and out of the car, kneeling has improved, and after

sleeping in a recliner for five years, I'm finally sleeping comfortably in my own bed again.

I'm stronger, more relaxed, and sleeping better. Walking, riding in the car, bending, standing, sitting, and lifting are all easier than they used to be.

Last year I couldn't even mow my lawn because it hurt too much.

Now I'm back to mowing my lawn, hanging laundry outside, taking out the garbage, cleaning my house, and going up and down the basement stairs. My family keeps telling me how much straighter I'm standing and how much better I'm walking. Even one of my nephews noticed. He said, "**You're standing straighter!**" I smiled and proudly replied, "**Yes, I am!**"

But the moment that meant the most to me came when my granddaughter graduated from UW–Madison.

That day I walked **10,000 steps** and did just fine.

Before coming to the Wisconsin Spine Center, that would have been absolutely impossible.

The staff have been wonderful throughout my care. Everyone is friendly, professional, caring, and accommodating. They always explain what they're doing, answer my questions, stay on schedule, and are willing to work with me whenever I need to reschedule an appointment.

If you asked me whether I would recommend the Wisconsin Spine Center, my answer would be simple:

"Definitely! 100%!"

If you're struggling like I was, don't wait as long as I did. Make an appointment and find out if they can help you too. I'm so thankful I finally made that appointment, and so are my kids. They're thrilled that their mother is back to living her life again!

-Carol Milbrath