Bone Spurs And My Back?
What are they? Bone spurs or osteophytes, are bony projections that form off of the bones of the spine, (vertebra) and joints of the extremities, (shoulders, elbow, wrists, hip, knee, ankle and foot).

Why do they form? They are the bodies attempt to increase the surface area of that particular bone to help distribute the weight or load across a joint that has been damaged by arthritis.

How about some science? Okay! This bony response is referred to as: Wolff's law. It is a theory developed by the German anatomist and surgeon Julius Wolff (1836–1902) in the 19th century, that states that bone in a healthy person or animal will adapt to the loads under which it is placed. If loading on a particular bone increases, the bone will remodel itself over time to become stronger to resist that sort of loading. The internal architecture of the trabeculae undergoes adaptive changes, followed by secondary changes to the external cortical portion of the bone, perhaps becoming thicker as a result. The inverse is true as well: if the loading on a bone decreases, the bone will become weaker due to turnover, (think osteoporosis), it is less metabolically costly to maintain and there is no stimulus for continued remodeling that is required to maintain bone mass.

So what causes this?
Gravity: The simple fact that the core of the earth constantly pulls on you (9.80665 m/s2 or 32.1737 ft/s2).

Time: The longer you are alive the more weight or load your bones have to support. Rarely do I see an x-ray of someone over 40 WITHOUT bone spurs.

Repetitive micro-trauma: This is the cumulative effect of everything you do, what I call the activities of daily living; work, play, even just sitting on the couch.

Trauma: Any major accidents (car, falling down, etc.) can be the beginning.

The consequences? Bone spurs typically limit joint motion, which leads to: tight muscles, adhesion build-up and trapping of chemical fluids, all of which can lead to acute or chronic joint and muscle pain.

What to do?
Chiropractic adjustments: Surprise! Routine care is the best way to maintain proper joint motion and decrease the risk of bone spur formation and/or slow the progression.

Stretching/exercise: Motion, motion, motion. Keep your joints healthy with daily activity, avoid long episodes of sitting or standing.

Keep the weight off: Fewer pounds = less stress on the bones = fewer bone spurs.