

Lower Back Pain

Lower back pain (LBP) affects nearly everyone at some time in his or her life but it is rarely serious.

Try not to worry about your back pain. Unnecessary worry can delay your recovery.

Stay Active.

Stay in work. Most people continue working or return to work within a few days.

Do's and don'ts

- Do stay as active as usual, if possible. But see your doctor if the pain persists or suddenly gets worse.
- Do speak with your GP or Pharmacist about pain relieving medication.
- Do speak to your manager or safety representative at work, and, if necessary, discuss what can be done to help you stay at work.
- Do find out about back pain.
- Do stay active and try to exercise.
- Don't take to your bed and wait for the pain to go away. The sooner you get back to normal activity the better.
- Don't worry. Staying active is unlikely to damage your back.
- Don't avoid activity simply as a way of avoiding the pain.

New Episode of Low Back Pain

Simple back strain is very common. Given sensible care it will usually resolve naturally within a few days or weeks. You should try to:

- Keep active and stay at work if possible.
- Take simple pain relief.
- A cold or hot pack, or rubs, to the affected may provide temporary relief.
- Gradually increase your physical activity.

Your symptoms should ease over a few weeks. Most people are back to normal activities within six weeks but if you have severe back pain which is not improving or gets worse you should see your doctor.

Here are some simple exercises that you may find helpful in the early days:

Exercise 1 – Knee rolling



Lying on your back with your knees bent and together. Slowly roll your knees from side to side keeping your upper trunk still. Move your knees from side to side, only doing a small range of movement Repeat 10 times.

Exercise 2 – Pelvic Tilts



Lying on your back with your knees bent and arms by your side. Flatten your spine towards the bed and then gently arch it. Repeat 10 times.

Exercise 3 – Extension in Lying



Lying on your front with your hands at shoulder height.

Straighten your elbows and lift your upper body off the bed/floor as far as you can. Keep the front of your hips on the bed/floor and keep your legs relaxed.

Repeat 10 times.

Please note – this exercise should not increase your pain. If it does your must stop it immediately.

Long Term Care

Once you have recovered from your back pain it is important to try and prevent future episodes. Keeping fit is the single most important factor in preventing Low Back Pain.

You should try to do some moderately strenuous activity five days each week for a total of 30-40 minutes. The level of exercise depends on how fit you are to begin with but may be as simple as:

Taking a brisk walk eg. the last ½ a mile to work.

Swimming or cycling.

Exercise class at the gym or swimming pool.

When to Consult Your Doctor

If you are in severe pain which gets worse over several weeks instead of better, or if you are unwell with back pain you should see your doctor.

You should see your doctor straight away if you have:

- Difficulty passing or controlling urine.
- Numbness around your back passage.
- Numbness in the groin area.
- Pins and needles.
- Weakness in both legs.
- Unsteadiness on your feet.

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