

Exercises

As everyone's back condition is different, it is important to see a Physiotherapist to get the right exercises for you. Some exercises to try (see below) should not cause any increasing pain during or after the exercises and should help ease your pain.



Strengthening tummy muscles.



Stretch back after long periods of sitting.



Pull your knee up to your chest.



Place your heel on a chair to stretch the back of the legs.



Lay on the floor and roll legs side to side.

Low Back Pain



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What Is Low Back Pain?

Most back pain is caused by joint and muscle strain, trauma, poor posture or poor body mechanics.

Back pain can affect anyone at any age, and most people will suffer an episode sometime in their life.

Causes

Back pain can be caused by a sudden incident but more often it is due to cumulative damage over a long period of time. For example:

- Sitting - slouching over an office desk, or on a sofa for long periods without changing position or without support.
- Driving - driving in a slumped position for long periods can put strain on the spine and pressure at the base of the back.
- Posture - not maintaining correct posture while standing or doing activities such as housework, DIY and gardening.
- Lifting & Bending- lifting items which are too heavy or bending/twisting while lifting or moving awkward items can often lead to straining the back.
- Sleeping - sleeping on an old, soft or sagging mattress.
- Fitness - low overall fitness and being overweight can also contribute towards back pain and often delays the recovery.

Symptoms

Simple back pain accounts for approximately 95% of low back pain and symptoms are felt mainly in the back, but may spread to the buttocks and thighs. It will come and go at different times, depending on posture, activity and age.

Less than 5% of back problems are severe, but can be caused by pressure on the nerves from a bulging disc or other structure.

Pain can often be felt all the way down one or both legs with pins and needles or numbness. This is often known as sciatica.

Diagnosis

A Physiotherapist will be able to determine the structure(s) involved and a Doctor should be consulted if you have:

- fever
- severe pain which starts for no reason
- pain down the legs below the knees
- numbness/weakness in one or both
- loss of bladder or bowel control

If the problem doesn't respond to treatment from the Physiotherapist it may be necessary to do further investigations such as x-rays, MRI scan or blood tests.

Treatment

Stay Active - It has been shown that gentle activity is much better than bed rest. If you do need to rest make sure you get up regularly and move about.

Painkillers - Paracetamol or ibuprofen are usually enough to relieve simple back pain. A hot water bottle or ice pack may also be useful to control the pain.

Physiotherapy - involves treatment such as ultrasound, mobilization, stretching and strengthening exercises.

The Physiotherapist will also be able to explain how the injury occurred and how to prevent re-injury by giving postural and ergonomic advice.

Exercises - The biggest component of rehabilitation is a home exercise programme which should be done daily to get the back moving and help it to get stronger.

Exercise programmes, such as Pilates will also focus on improving your posture and core stability.

Surgery - If comprehensive therapy and exercises has not helped severe back pain then surgery or injections may be helpful if a Consultant feels it necessary.