

## TREATMENT



- ⇒ Categorized into ACUTE or CHRONIC back pain:
- ⇒ Over the counter pain killers: paracetamol or a Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory drug: Ibuprofen. (Ask advice from Pharmacist).
- ⇒ GP prescription: may prescribe diazepam to help reduce muscle spasms.
- ⇒ Exercise: remain as physically active as possible. Research shows back pain sufferers who remain active recover quicker.
- ⇒ Use a hot water bottle/wheat back over area that feels stiff and sore.
- ⇒ If your back feels hot, inflamed and swollen use ice/frozen peas.
- ⇒ Physiotherapy: hand on treatment, spinal strengthening, education, postural correction and advice, ergonomic assessment (correct lifting technique and adaptations at work advice) and pain relief (TENS/ACUPUNCTURE).

**PREVENTION:** reduce any stress/strain on your back

- \* Loose any excess weight
- \* Flat shoes, cushioned soles
- \* Avoid sudden movements
- \* Reduce stress, anxiety, tension.
- \* Lift heavy items correctly

**POSTURE:** the way you sit/stand/lie down are important and can have a significant effect on your back. The following tips should help you to maintain a good posture.

(See next page for more advice)

**STANDING:** upright, head facing forwards, back straight, balance weight evenly and keep legs straight.

**SITTING:** sit upright, with support in small of back using either a rolled up towel, small cushion or even stuffed pair of tights!

**DRIVING:** make sure lower back is properly supported. Correctly position your wing mirrors preventing you from having to twist round. If driving long distances you should take regular breaks to avoid fatigue to go through some lower back exercises and movements.

**SLEEPING:** Support head with a pillow, make sure it is not at a steep angle. In acute back pain, lying on your side with your painful side up, and drop your top leg over often is a good pain relief position.

**EXERCISE:** is an excellent way of preventing back pain and reducing any back pain. Exercises like walking, swimming are a low impact way of exercising, but excellent for strengthening spine. Activities like yoga or Pilates can help improve flexibility and strength of your back.

See other available leaflets on the website for further advice and tips.

### MORE RESOURCES:

[www.sheffieldbackpain.com](http://www.sheffieldbackpain.com) a local guide to back pain in Sheffield.

[www.patient.co.uk/showdoc/23068686/](http://www.patient.co.uk/showdoc/23068686/) to obtain a 4 page advice sheet.

[www.backcare.org](http://www.backcare.org) for detailed information especially in relation to work issues.

THE BACK BOOK—a very good book written by a host of professionals and provides comprehensive advice:

3 Sandygate Park, Sheffield, S10 5TZ

Tel: 0114 230 2030

Fax: 0114 263 0139

## When back pain strikes

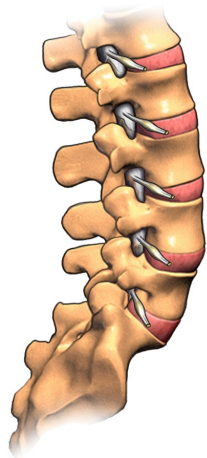


**Back pain is a common condition in the UK and it is the largest cause of work related absence.**

**It is uncomfortable but not usually serious.**

# Understanding the lower back

The complex structure of the back consists of.....



- 24 small bones (vertebrae), that support weight from above.
- Shock absorbing discs (Intervertebral discs) that cushions the bones.
- Ligaments (hold vertebra and disc together).
- Tendons to connect muscles to vertebrae.
- Spinal cord—which conducts the nerve signals.
- Nerves
- Muscles

## LOWER BACK

- Known as lumbar region, made up of 5 vertebrae L1,2,3,4,5.
- Supports entire weight of upper body
- Under constant pressure when you bend twist and lift.

## LOWER BACK PAIN

- Affects 7/10 people at some time in their lives
- It can come on suddenly or gradually after lifting, twisting, coughing or sneezing or after sporting injury or road traffic accident.
- You can damage any part of the structures listed above and this can cause pain and discomfort.,

## SYMPTOMS

The main symptom is a pain or an ache anywhere on your back between bottom of ribs and top of legs.



The majority of back pain improve quickly within a week or so.

Common symptoms:

Ache, Stiffness, Pain, Avoiding movement

## YOU SHOULD VISIT YOUR GP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU EXPERIENCE BACK PAIN PLUS ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:

- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Weight loss (unexplained)
- ◆ Inflammation/swelling
- ◆ Constant unremitting back pain
- ◆ Pain that travels to the chest
- ◆ Pain down both legs
- ◆ Loss of bowel or bladder control
- ◆ Unable to pass urine



## COMMON CAUSES OF LOWER BACK PAIN

- ⇒ Pregnancy
- ⇒ Gynaecological –PID
- ⇒ OA
- ⇒ Stress
- ⇒ Viral infection
- ⇒ Bone disorders
- ⇒ Bladder/Kidney infection
- ⇒ Osteoporosis
- ⇒ Trip/Fall
- ⇒ Trauma
- ⇒ Reduced exercise
- ⇒ Obesity
- ⇒ Sleep disorder



## Causes - non specific (not caused by serious damage/disease).

- ⇒ Bending awkwardly
- ⇒ Lifting, carrying, pushing or pulling incorrectly
- ⇒ Slouching
- ⇒ Standing and bending down
- ⇒ Coughing / Sneezing
- ⇒ Stress
- ⇒ Driving

