

Your Injury

Back pain can occur following trauma, commonly after lifting or bending, or may appear mysteriously with no apparent reason for onset. It is quite commonly recurrent.

There are many causes of back pain, including trauma from road traffic accidents, repetitive lifting and bending, and through sport. However, the most common form of back pain is from postural stresses, putting undue demand on the joints, discs and soft tissues of the back. Of all the postural stresses, poor sitting posture is by far the one most often at fault.

The pain may be local, but can spread across the back, buttocks and into the legs. Associated leg symptoms are not unusual. Pins and needles and/or numbness may be felt in the thigh, calf and foot. With these added complication it is important that you consult with a Medical Professional.

In the back (lumbar spine) there are many structures including joints, discs, ligaments, tendons, muscles and nerve tissue, any of which can be a source of pain.

This advice leaflet has been produced to help you self manage your injury.

General Advice

MAINTAIN A GOOD POSTURE

DO sit in the correct posture. It is better to sit in a chair where your hips are higher than your knees. Sit with your bottom at the back of the chair and put a lumbar roll or rolled up towel in the hollow of your back.

DO offload the spine. When lying on your back, one or two pillow under the head and knees or with the knees on a chair or coffee table can help. Lying on your least painful side with pillows under the head and between the knees can be comfortable. Alternatively, lying on your front with pillows under the hips can be comfortable.

DO move frequently. Avoid sustained positions. Early gentle mobilisation of the back can speed up the recovery of back pain. Try gentle exercise.

DO avoid the positions that aggravate the back pain.

DO you heat or ice packs wrapped in a towel for 15-20 minutes at a time to relieve muscle spasms. It is wise to seek advice from a health professional before using heat/ice packs.

DO lift correctly. Keep the knees bent, back straight, and tighten the abdominal wall. Avoid carrying or lifting heavy objects. Avoid prolonged bending.

DO NOT lie in a bath for any length of time. It is recommended that you either knee in the bath or have a shower.

General Exercises

1. Lying on your back. Tighten the stomach muscles and press the small of your back into the floor. Repeat 5 (x2)
2. Lying on your back, knees bent. Slowly roll your knees from side to side. Repeat 5 (x2)
3. Lying on your back. Slowly bring both knees or alternate knee towards the chest. Repeat 5 (x2)
4. On hands and knees. Arch your spine upwards and then drop and hollow the spine. Repeat 5 (x2)
5. Lying face down with both your hands at shoulder height. Straighten your elbows and lift your upper trunk as far up as you can. Repeat 5 (x2)
6. Standing. Bend sideways at the waist. Repeat 5 (x2)

Never push the exercises so you are experiencing sharp pain. It is okay to experience some discomfort when exercising. The use of ice/heat before or after exercise can help settle any effects of the exercises.