

How to Manage Back Pain

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Get Fit & Stay Active

Leading a healthy and active life style is important for your bodies overall Health. While most people experience back pain at sometime in their life, in many cases back pain can be managed by keeping back muscles strong by staying active and making healthy choices.

Walking, swimming and stationary bike riding in conjunction with proper stretching and strengthening exercises are important in any workout routine. Exercise in conjunction with healthy eating and staying active are all ways to maintain your body's optimum health. Before beginning any new diet regimen or exercise routine it is recommended that you consult your health care provider.

Unhealthy behaviors such as smoking impact many parts of the body, including reducing the blood supply to your back, reducing the nutrients to your muscles.

Practice Proper Posture

In many cases back pain or injury can be avoided by maintaining good posture and when possible avoiding certain activities that may trigger back pain. This will vary by individual. Being mindful of good posture by not slouching, slumping or hunching over and sitting straight and standing tall go along ways to improving the health of your spine.

Avoid lifting and carrying health objects. When lifting always bend at the knees instead of bending your back and keep your feet apart for stability and carry objects close to your body. At the office keep your muscles working by alternating positions frequently and using proper ergonomics while working on the computer and using your keyboard.

When doing household chores and gardening, avoid stooping, awkward bending and lifting heavy objects. Warm up muscles with simple stretching exercises before doing any physical activity.

Self Care Remedies

Back pain should not and most often cannot be ignored. Unless there is a serious, underlying cause for the pain you are experiencing the best thing for treating back pain is to stay as active as possible. While bed rest was once believed to be an effective method of treatment, bed rest is no longer recommended. After an injury occurs, reducing physical activity for the first few days is

recommended to help reduce inflammation and alleviate symptoms, but gradually resuming your regular activities is the best medicine to treating a bad back.

Below are some quick reminders for responding to a back injury or flare up:

- Ease pressure on the back by placing pillows under and between your knees while resting or sleeping.
- Use ice or heat to calm back spasms and manage pain.
- After an injury or flare up ice packs should be applied to the area for no more than 15 minutes at a time for the first 48 to 72 hours. A heating pad, hot water bottle or hot towel can be used as needed after a couple of days. Too much cold can trigger spasms, while too much heat can cause more inflammation and hinder healing.
- Over the counter medications such as ibuprofen can assist in providing pain relief. Check with your doctor to find out the best choice for you.

Involve your Health Care Providers

Back pain can also be managed through massage, physical therapy and by visiting your chiropractor. Don't wait until you are in pain to get help. By keeping your back muscles healthy on a regular basis, you may be able to prevent future problems.

Acute back pain may be a sign of more serious health concerns. Listen to your body and respond. You should seek medical attention immediately if you have any of the following;

- Unexplained fever with back pain
- Back pain as a result of a fall, severe blow or auto accident
- You have weakness or numbness
- The pain is very sharp
- The pain is worse when lying down or awakens you from sleep
- The episode has lasted more than four weeks