

Therapy Services
Patient Information

Back Pain

Concise Information and exercises for patients

**The following guide is designed to help you understand
and manage your back pain**

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Introduction

Back pain is a common problem and often feels like a stiffness, ache or tension in your lower back. Sometimes the pain can travel down your legs or cause pins and needles or numbness. How you cope or manage your back pain is usually more important than an exact diagnosis. All back pain can be alarming and very painful but the following is often the case:

- Serious or permanent damage is rare
 - There are lots of things you can do to help yourself
 - Acute back pain improves in days or a few weeks
 - Aches and pains can last but will settle eventually
 - You may get further episodes of back pain but you should be able to return to normal activities in between
 - Movement and normal activity is good for your back
 - People who stay active and try to return to normal living cope the best and recover quicker
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Control of pain

There are a number of things you can do to control your pain. You may be prescribed pain relief to reduce your pain to allow you to become more active. A combination of different types of painkillers may be prescribed. You should not hesitate to use the prescribed medication. The medications should not cause harm and will enable you to get back to normal activities.

Paracetamol - This can effectively reduce low back pain if taken on a regular basis.

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs - Ibuprofen or Diclofenac. These can be taken with paracetamol if they are suitable for you. They can be given as tablets or as a gel to rub into the skin and help to reduce pain and inflammation.

Ice

Ice can be an effective and simple way of relieving pain and reducing inflammation, especially in the first 48 hours. Wrap an ice pack or pack of frozen peas in a damp tea towel and place on your back for 15-20 minutes. This can be repeated every hour as required. People who are sensitive to cold or have circulatory problems need to be wary when using ice treatment.

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Heat

Heat can also help to reduce pain and muscle spasm and is particularly useful after the first 48 hours. Use a heat pack or hot water bottle for 15-20 minutes.

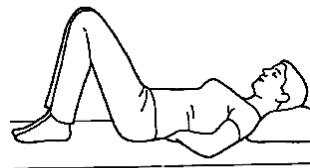
Rest for more than a day or two is not good and can prolong your pain and slow down your recovery. Regular physical activity is good. The sooner you get active the sooner your back will feel better

Exercises

Bed rest is not advised, as this can make your back stiff and weak. Exercise can help relieve pain and stiffness, build up muscle strength and flexibility as well as improve your general fitness.

Pelvic Tilt

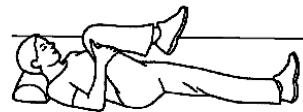
Whilst lying on your back, lift your tail bone up to flatten your back into the bed /floor and then slowly lower back down again gently arching the back.



Repeat x.....

Therapy Services**Patient Information****Knee to chest**

Bring one knee and hug it towards your chest, as far as you can comfortably. Hold for 5 seconds and then slowly lower. Repeat with the other knee.



Repeat x

Knee Roll

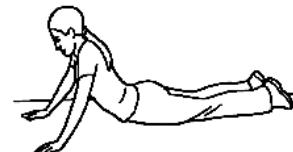
Bend your knees and rest your feet on the bed/floor. Keeping your knees together, roll them gently from side to side as far as comfortable.



Repeat x

Back Extension

Lying face down with your hands shoulder width apart. Keeping your bottom and back relaxed, push through your hands to gently arch your back and slowly lower back down.



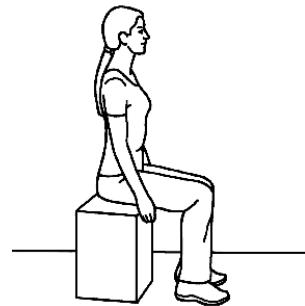
Repeat x

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Posture

Posture plays an important role in back pain. Choose a chair that gives you the correct amount of support.

Use a small cushion or a rolled up towel to support your lower back. Avoid sitting for long periods for long periods of time.



Key messages

- Stay active and try to return to normal activities as soon as possible
- Modify activities if needed
- Manage pain control with medication and other remedies
- Most back pain will improve and is not due to a serious cause
- Most scans do not usually help or change the management of back pain
- Correct posture helps
- Exercises will strengthen your back and help minimize the recurrence of back pain
- You will have good and bad days
- Only you can get your back going

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Contact details

If you require further advice please feel free to contact us:

Therapy Team: 01202 442121

For further general health-related information, please ask the relevant department for an Information Prescription or contact:

The Health Information Centre

Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Longfleet Road
Poole
Dorset
BH15 2JB

www.poole.nhs.uk

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We can supply this information in other formats, in larger print, on audiotape, or have it translated for you. Please call the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01202 448499, text 07758 272495 or email pals@poole.nhs.uk for further advice.

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Further Information given:

<https://www.poole.nhs.uk/pdf/Back%20pain%20booklet1.pdf>

- Full advice booklet on managing your back pain

<https://www.poole.nhs.uk/a-z-services/t/therapy-services/therapy-outpatients/patient-information-leaflets/spinal-information-leaflets.aspx>

- Link to back pain management webpage

References and other sources

Burton, K., et al. 2002. *The Back Book – UK Edition*, 2nd Ed. TSO (The Stationery Office)

Arthritis Research UK. Back Pain: <http://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/arthritis-information/conditions/back-pain.aspx>

<http://www.dorsetpain.org.uk/>

www.myhealthdorset.org.uk