

Self Managing Low Back Pain

You don't have to be doing back flips to experience the agony of low back pain. Something as simple as lifting boxes while spring cleaning, hunching down to work in the garden, or stretching high to re-paint the ceiling even trying your best Freddie Flintoff impression can bring on low back pain

The truth is that most low back problems are the result of cumulative trauma to joints, lumbar discs, and muscles and not aggressive injuries or accidents.

Most back pain can result from a seemingly innocent move, but often is actually the accumulation of months or years of bad posture; poor body mechanics (for example, lifting with the back instead of the knees); stressful and ergonomically incorrect working and living habits; and lack of flexibility and physical fitness.

Instructions to help ease new onset or acute back pain, promote proper healing, and prevent re-injury. This information is provided as a resource. If your symptoms persist or do not improve, contact Prohab and arrange a **free phone consult. 0870 850 8892**

Use of Cold Pack

The application of a cold pack to the painful area of your back may be helpful the first few days after injury. Apply the cold pack for 10-15 minute intervals several times throughout the day.

Activities to Avoid in the Acute Stage:

- Avoid sitting for the first few days. Do walk as much as possible and never sit for more than 20 mins.
- Avoid bending forward. When rising from a chair, move to the edge and keep your back as straight as possible as you rise
- Avoid sleeping on soft beds or sofas.
- Avoid twisting your back when changing positions or getting in and out of bed or a car.
- Avoid soaking in a hot bathtub. The heat can aggravate your low back pain.

NOTE: If you develop pain radiating down your leg, weakness, numbness, or tingling in your foot call Prohab immediately on 0870 850 8892.

***If you develop difficulties with bowel or bladder functions or experience numbness around your saddle region call your GP immediately and/or go the Emergency Department.**

After two spinal surgeries my consultant said I would never run, let alone play football again. I was 27 yrs old. With Prohab's help I am now back playing 90 minutes of football competitively. The holistic approach Prohab uses was the key to that. I thoroughly recommend anyone who has been told 'that's all we can do, you will have to live it' to have a Prohab assessment.

Joe Taylor – Solicitor, Linklaters



Some helpful positions

You can greatly influence your recovery by relieving pressure on your low back.

Sidelying

Lie on the non-painful side first. If this does not take your pain away or ease it, try placing a small towel roll at your waistline, while lying on your non painful side. A small pillow between your knees may help, also.

Backlying

Lie on your back with a rolled bath towel approximately three inches in diameter at your waist, filling the curve in your low back. You may pin the towel around your wait to keep it in position.

Sitting

Avoid sitting for the first few days. When you do sit, avoid sitting for prolonged periods, especially in a recliner or sofa. It is best to sit in a straight-backed chair with a rolled towel in the curve of your low back at the waistline.

NOTE: Even though these positions are good for your back, it may be necessary to change your position frequently, especially at first.

Correct Biomechanics

With poor body mechanics, lifting even a slight weight can put an excessive strain on your lower back. So don't reach and bend from the waist . that forces your back to support your upper body, plus the load. Over time, poor body mechanics can cause disc damage and lead to a herniated disc.

Most back injuries occur in the lower back because that area must support the weight of the body in addition to the stress of lifting.

Principles of Proper Body Mechanics

Following certain principles will help protect your back:

- Use a wide base of support.
- Maintain your centre of gravity close to your base of support. Squat when lifting.
- Keep the combined centre of gravity of you and the object you're lifting within your base of support.
- Keep the object you are lifting close to your body.
- Use stronger muscles to perform heavy work . that means legs, not back! Bend hips and knees, and arch your back.
- Pivot your feet when you turn . don't twist your body.

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