

Moving back to health: Don't let your back pain get the better of you!



This advice is provided by a team of health care professionals to help and support you so you can take control. It is important not to let back pain take over your life. Following this information will help you to work, rest and play.

Advice

You should stay active

Bed rest and immobility prolong back pain and stop you from recovering sooner. Stay gently active to help your back to recover. You should expect some things you do will be painful. However remember - **hurt does not equal harm so even if it is painful you will not be harming your back.**

Exercises

Some people find gentle stretches and exercises help settle their back pain. There is no strong evidence to suggest any particular exercise is better than another. If you over do it, you may aggravate the pain, but again you will not do harm. **The rule of thumb is to do 'a little and often' of what feels comfortable and as pain subsides, build-up the exercises.**

Back pain will usually settle by itself. Like any other injury, the body heals damaged tissues in the back. 50% of people will be better within 2 weeks and 90% by 8 weeks.

Back pain is usually not serious 90% of it is caused by a simple injury such as a sprain or strain. While painful, it doesn't mean it is serious even if the pain travels down your legs.

Be aware of things that make the pain worse

Long periods of sitting/standing, heavy lifting/twisting are likely to aggravate back pain unnecessarily. Try to avoid activities that are going to increase the strain on your back. Keep active but avoid excessive lifting and long periods in the same positions

Take painkillers regularly

This allows you to stay active, prevents muscle spasm and stops you adopting odd postures in an attempt to avoid pain. If your painkillers are not allowing you to stay active then consult your doctor and/or community pharmacist for help and advice. It is important that you take pain killers regularly in order to remain gently active.

Stay at work


It is best to try work as normal. It encourages gentle activity, and prevents back pain having a negative impact on your life. Discuss your work options with your employer, they may be able to help you stay in work and keep active while you have back pain.


You are not alone 70 to 80% experience a significant episode of back pain some time in their lives. It should be seen as a normal part of life.


Routine X-rays/scans are inappropriate. It has been shown that these tests are not helpful and your GP will not routinely send you for them


More information:


 www.sheffieldbackpain.com - a local guide to back pain in Sheffield


 www.patient.co.uk/showdoc/23068686/ - to obtain a 4-page advice sheet


 www.arc.org.uk/arthritis/patpubs/6002/6002.asp - more detailed information


 www.backcare.org.uk - for detailed information especially in relation to work related issues

 Help line - 0870 9500275

 THE BACK BOOK - A very good book written by a team consisting of a GP, orthopaedic surgeon, physiotherapist, osteopath, and psychologist and provides comprehensive advice.

 Can be ordered from www.tsoshop.co.uk, or www.amazon.co.uk

 Or most bookshops (ISBN 10 0117029491)

 Your community pharmacist will be able to help you choose the most appropriate pain killers to take

USEFUL VIDEOS:

Prof Peter O'Sullivan, Back pain - separating fact from fiction
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dISQLUE4brQ>

DocMikeEvans on low back pain
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOjTegn9RuY>