

Low Back Pain

At sometime in our lives nearly all of us will experience some degree of low back pain. It can affect our everyday routines, our work life and our social life. Without appropriate treatment and education low back pain has been found to reoccur in up to 90% of sufferers and at its most extreme low back pain can become quite disabling. Whilst most occurrences of low back pain are not debilitating, even minor low back pain can cause us to alter or stop many of our everyday activities. These include things carrying groceries, playing sport, sitting and reaching for items overhead.

As with most musculoskeletal conditions, early treatment can be key to a speedy recovery for anyone suffering low back pain.

Low Back Pain and Referred Pain

Pain coming from the lower back can often be felt in other areas of the body. This means that the effects may be felt further up the back, in the legs and even right down to the feet.

Who is Affected?

Low back pain can affect both men and women equally. It occurs most frequently between the ages of 30 and 50. This is due in part to the aging process, but is also a result of sedentary life styles with too little exercise (National Institute of Neurological Disorders & Strokes—USA).



Common Causes of Low Back Pain

As we get older, our bone strength, muscle flexibility and strength tend to decrease. Adults with back pain can often have restricted movement and often experience some muscle spasm or weakness. Some of the most common contribute to low back pain, include:

1. A sedentary occupation involving prolonged sitting or driving
2. Poor abdominal muscle strength
3. Being inflexible or hyperflexible
4. Direct Injury or trauma to the back or the development of scar tissue from an old Injury
5. Degenerative diseases such as arthritis and osteoporosis
6. Poor sleeping position, obesity, smoking, weight gain during pregnancy, stress, poor physical condition and poor posture.

Tips for Preventing Low Back Pain

For a large number of people low back pain will be caused by muscle weakness in the back, abdomen, or both. Here are a few tips for taking care of your back:

- 1) Stay active and try to maintain a good level of flexibility and fitness.
- 2) Be aware of your posture. It is important to recognise when you are slouching or sitting too stiffly and causing tension in your muscles. (See Good Posture leaflet)
- 3) Avoid sitting for longer than 20–30 minutes. Take regular breaks and stand up and move around. Whilst standing you could lean slowly backwards to stretch out your back.
- 4) Be aware of what you sit on. For example, do you have a wallet in your back pocket? This can put pressure on the sciatic nerve.
- 5) Maintain good abdominal tone, many of your stomach muscles start from the back, so stomach muscles are important in maintaining the strength and stability of your back. This does not mean however that you need to do hundreds of sit-ups. A qualified physiotherapist will be able to advise you on exercises specifically for your condition.
- 6) Be aware of your bag. Both children and adults should use a backpack rather than a shoulder bag will help distribute the weight more equally.
- 7) Learn the correct way to do activities such as bending and lifting, ensure that your work desk is the correct height and that you use a chair with good support.
- 8) Try and relax. When you get stressed your muscles get tight and sore. Learn some simple relaxation exercises and try to incorporate them into your everyday routine.
- 9) Maintain a healthy weight. Just carrying around a belly can put extra stress through your spine.
- 10) Prevention is always better than a cure. A musculoskeletal physiotherapist, can tailor a back exercise regime tailored specifically to your needs. Doing these exercises regularly can help you avoid low back pain by improving strength, flexibility and range of motion.



When low back pain strikes, early intervention from a musculoskeletal physiotherapist is essential to achieve fast results and a good recovery.

Pure Physio Clinic physios' are experts in preventing, treating and rehabilitating low back pain. If you have an enquiry or would like to make an appointment, visit our website:

www.purephysioclinic.com or call 07747444404