



# Back Pain

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## Back Pain

Back pain is an incredibly common complaint in working adults and elders. It is estimated that approximately 80% of adults will experience an episode of low back pain at least once in their lifetime. Knowing which activities and positions ease or aggravate symptoms can certainly help to reduce or even prevent the pain.



### Cause of common back pain:

- Poor posture
- Improper lifting techniques
- Improper sleeping positions
- Back Injury, such as muscle strains or ligament sprains
- Degenerative conditions such as osteoporosis, arthritis, and degenerative disc or joint diseases in the spine
- Bone and muscle diseases, such as herniated discs, spondylosis and spondylolisthesis, or spinal stenosis
- Stress, anxiety, or depression

Other less common, but more serious causes of back pain include renal disease, aneurysm, spinal tumors or cancer with metastasis to the spinal cord, etc.

### Common Symptoms

- Ache or pain in the lower back
- Sharp, shooting pain that radiates to the hip or leg
- Numbness or weakness of legs
- Bowel and /or bladder disturbances

Symptoms may occur periodically or all the time. Some postures, positions, or activities may exacerbate or relieve symptoms.

## Treatment of Acute Back Pain

1. Resting: In people with acute severe back pain, 1-2 day rest is advised. Sleeping on the firm mattress is also recommended.
2. Over the counter pain-relieving medications such as paracetamol or aspirin taken every 4-6 hours or as directed can help to reduce the pain. If the pain is not relieved within 5-7 days, consult the physician.
3. Adjustment of posture, correction of sleeping, sitting, and standing positions, as well as lifting properly can help to avoid aggravation of current symptoms.
4. Weight reduction, in people with over weight.
5. Physical Therapy
6. Acupuncture / Dry needling / Injection
7. Surgery

## How to Prevention of back pain

Proper positioning can reduce tension of your back muscles. Be conscious of your posture throughout the day



### 1.Sleep in a Proper Position

The following are safe positions that keep your spine in good alignment while you sleep:

Sleeping on one side: Place a pillow or bolster between your legs and keep the lower leg straight. Bend the upper leg, knee, and hip.



Sleeping on your back: Place a pillow underneath both knees



Sleeping on your stomach: This position should be avoided in people with low back pain.



## 2. Sitting

In a chair: While sitting back on the chair, both feet should reach the floor and your hips and thigh should be level with the floor. The chair should not recline more than 100 degrees, and should have armrests for support.



In the car: Adjust the seat close to the steering wheel so that your knees are slightly higher than your hips when pressing the accelerator. Keep your elbow at 30 degree while holding the steering wheel. Avoid driving for longer than one hour if possible.



## 3. Getting out of the chair

Move to the edge of the chair and push your arms against the chair to assist you getting up while keeping your back straight.



## 4. Standing

Stand with good posture by resting one foot on a low footstool, alternating occasionally.

## 5. Properly Lifting & Bending

- Bending your knees helps to maintain the natural curve of your low back and encourages your legs to do most of the work.
- Hold the object close to you and use your legs to stand up.



## Exercises

The following are a few exercises aimed at improving the flexibility in your back.



### Knee to chest

Lie on your back and pull one knee to your chest and hold it for 10 seconds. Repeat with the opposite leg.



### Hamstring Stretch

Lie on your back and lift one leg up, keeping your knee straight and the other leg on the ground. Support the lifted leg by placing both hands behind the lifted thigh, knee, or calves. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat with the opposite leg.



### Piriformis Stretch

Lie on your back. Create a figure of 4 with the right leg bent across your straight left leg. Use your left hand to apply a gentle pressure downward and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat with the opposite leg.



### Calf Stretch

Stand facing the wall while placing both hands on the wall for support. Place one leg behind you, keeping the knee straight. The front leg will be bent slightly. Press your back heel down towards the ground. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat with the opposite leg. In people with osteoarthritis knee, knee should not bend over 90 degrees.



### Abdominal muscles

- Lie on your back and bend both hips and knees. Cross your arms on your chest and use your stomach muscles to lift your neck and shoulders off the ground slightly. Hold the position for 5 seconds and rest.



- Lie on your back, bend both hips and knees. Lift one leg up, keeping your knee straight while tightening the stomach muscle. Hold this position for 10 seconds and rest then repeat with the opposite leg.



### Bridge

Lie on your back with both hips and knees bent and feet flat on the floor. While keeping your stomach and buttocks muscles tight, slowly raise buttocks off the floor. Hold the position for 10 seconds and rest.

**Remark:** Strong back, stomach, and leg muscles are good protection against low back pain. These exercises are the general guideline to protect the back pain. They may not suit for everyone. However, if you have an existing medical problem, remember to consult with your doctor or physical therapist before beginning any exercise routine.



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