

## About Low Back Pain

Pain is part of the body's natural defence system. The sensation of pain does not necessarily mean that harm is being caused. Low back pain is very common and often is nothing serious, usually lasting for a few days or weeks. The exact cause of non-specific low back pain may be difficult to determine. The most common symptoms are decreased range of movement, tension, soreness, pain and / or stiffness.

Successful management of low back pain episodes can influence your abilities in the longer term. There is good scientific evidence on how we should deal with acute low back pain.

## What to do when you have back pain

- Do not rest in bed for more than 2 days unless you have to. Prolonged immobility can hamper your recovery as it can lead to weakness and an increase in stiffness as well as loss of fitness. Movement will help to speed recovery.
- Take adequate painkilling medication in fixed doses, at fixed times, in accordance with the medicine's instructions to allow you to keep active. Do not take painkillers only when the pain gets too bad. Seek advice on pain relieving drugs with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Keep as active as possible to keep your back fit and healthy. Try to establish and maintain a regular routine of low-impact activities such as walking, swimming or yoga.
- Learn and use relaxation techniques – for example, listening to music in a quiet, darkened room.
- Identify and change everyday lifestyle factors that may currently be aggravating your back. For example, prolonged sitting and uncomfortable postures adopted when at work, or when driving.
- Go back to work as soon as possible. This can reduce the risk of developing a long-term problem. Do not, however, expect to be completely pain-free before resuming work / normal daily activities.
- Pace your daily activities – break large, time-consuming activities into smaller, more manageable chunks and gradually increase.
- Join an exercise class – under the supervision of a qualified instructor – following a structured exercise programme.
- Arrange a visit to a physiotherapist, trained in the skills of mobilization and manipulation techniques, who can devise a Home Exercise Plan and help to provide an improvement in pain and abilities.

### **IMPORTANT:**

If you choose to have any treatments with a health professional, you should ensure that they are registered with the appropriate regulatory body:

Physiotherapist: Health Professions Council: [www.hpc-uk.org](http://www.hpc-uk.org)

Doctor: General Medical Council: [www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org)

Pharmacist: Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain: [www.rpsgblist.org](http://www.rpsgblist.org)