

BACK PAIN: WHAT CAN I DO?

Back pain is very common. Although it can be painful and worrying, most episodes are not caused by a serious underlying problem and often improve with time.

KEEP MOVING

- Try to stay active and continue with your usual day to day activities as much as you can.
- You may need to temporarily adapt some activities, but prolonged bed rest is generally not recommended.
- Start with what feels manageable and gradually build from there.

EXERCISE CAN HELP

There isn't one exercise that is right for everyone.

Walking, mobility exercises, strengthening and other forms of exercise can all be useful. Find something appropriate for your needs, abilities and goals, and build up gradually.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT "PERFECT" POSTURE

There isn't one perfect posture that you need to maintain throughout the day.

If you spend a long time sitting or standing, try to change position and move regularly.

DO I NEED A SCAN?

Usually, no.

X-rays and MRI scans are not routinely recommended for uncomplicated low back pain. Imaging may be considered when the result is likely to change how your condition is managed.

WHAT ABOUT HANDS ON TREATMENT?

Hands on treatment, such as mobilisation, manipulation or soft tissue techniques, may be helpful for some people with low back pain.

NICE recommends that manual therapy is used alongside exercise and advice to keep active.

Hands on treatment can therefore form part of a broader approach to helping you keep moving, build your strength and gradually return to your usual activities.

WHEN SHOULD I GET HELP?

Speak to a healthcare professional if your back pain is not improving, is getting worse, is stopping you from doing your usual activities, or you are concerned about your symptoms.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL HELP IF YOUR BACK PAIN IS ACCOMPANIED BY:

New numbness or loss of feeling around your genitals or bottom, new changes in bladder or bowel control, pain, tingling, weakness or numbness affecting both legs, chest pain and back pain following a serious accident