



24.24 Back Pain & Work: A Guide for Employees

Introduction

Back pain, particularly lower back pain, is very common. It usually improves within a few weeks but can sometimes last longer or keep coming back. Some types of work can cause back injury or make existing problems worse.

Factors that can cause or impact existing back pain include heavy lifting, poor posture, repetitive movements or poor ergonomics

It is more prevalent in certain types of work including:

- Display Screen Use & Office Work
- Professional Driving particularly FLT & off-road
- Any work that involves lifting, carrying, pushing or pulling
- Health & Social Care roles
- Factory or Construction work



What can I do?

Try to identify what factors seem to cause or irritate symptoms. Certain movements or tasks will probably cause more discomfort than others.

- Avoid heavy or awkward lifting or lifting from the floor.
- “Warm Up Exercises” might help to alleviate symptoms if undertaken before starting work or after breaks.
- Simple back exercises might help with symptoms.
- Consider asking your employer for training or an ergonomic review of your work or process.
- Over-the-counter medication might help with short term symptoms – consult your local pharmacist.

What if it doesn't improve or gets worse?

If self-care doesn't help or your symptoms are getting worse, then you should consider:

- Stopping self-care exercises if it seems to be making your back more painful.
- Reporting it to your employer and/or Occupational Health Practitioner.
- Requesting a temporary redeployment to another role or area as a short-term measure (this might not be possible).
- Seeking review with your GP or a Physiotherapist.

If you have been given an exercise or treatment programme by a healthcare professional, you should follow it closely for the time frame specified. Ensure that you follow Manual Handling Training guidance.



You may be asked to keep a symptom diary to help the practitioner identify which aspects of your job may be affecting your condition. You may be asked to record pain using a simple scale along with other factors such as weights lifted, frequency of movement, force applied etc.

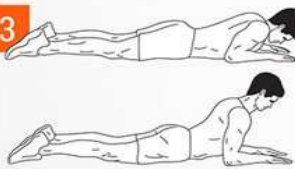
In the unlikely instance that an exercise programme seems to be making things worse, stop and contact your provider for further advice.

Simple Exercises for easing back pain

back exercises
HELPS REDUCE LOWER BACK PAIN,
TENSION, STIFFNESS AND SORENESS
neilarey.com

1 
10 bottom to heels stretch

2 
10 opposite arm / leg raises

3 
10 back extensions

4 
10 bridges

5 
10 knee rolls

NHS choices more info: goo.gl/CeM6Tu

Further information can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/back-pain/>

A copy of this & other documentation can be found from <https://mohs.co.uk/resources> or using the QR code at the top of this page.