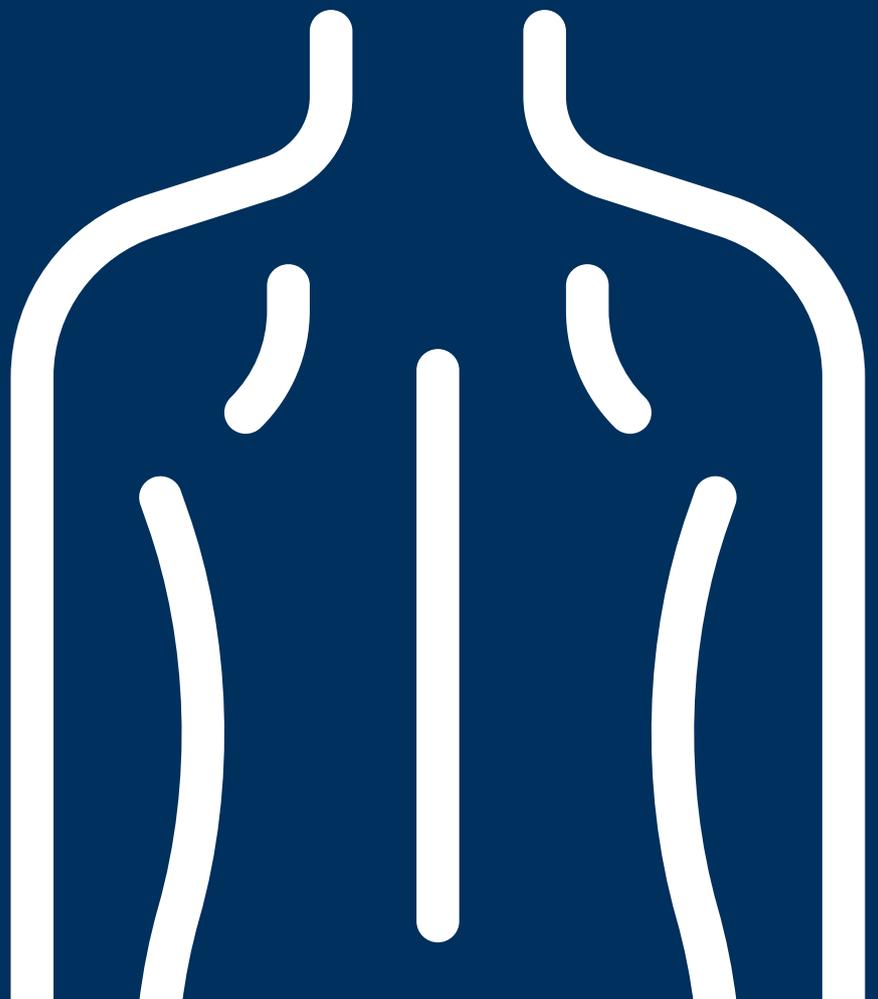


A Practical Guide To Back Pain Relief



Fulham
Osteopaths
Feel Great Again



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If you have back pain, you won't need telling how much it affects your life. It's not just the pain, or even the things it stops us from doing, but it can cause depression and affect our moods.

This guide is designed to give you valuable information and advice to help reduce it.

However, before we go on, I need to clarify there may be complex reasons for your back pain. So, this is not medical advice or a 'do it yourself' guide and any steps you take are at your own risk.

If you do have any concerns, you should consult us or a suitable medical professional before trying anything in this guide.

With that said, let's get into it...

1. Control Inflammation

Inflammation is when a build up of fluids leads to swelling, and the swollen tissues irritate nerve endings which results in pain.

Typically this is caused by:

- A medical condition such as sciatica, herniated discs, arthritis and more. Even with these conditions, pain can be mitigated allowing you to lead a normal life.
- Injury caused by an accident, during sport or physical activity.

Here's Some Advice That Can Help

Diet do's and don'ts

It's easy to overlook how important diet is to controlling inflammation.

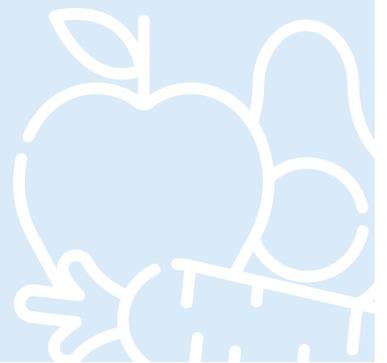
You don't need to be a Master Chef, but following these broad guidelines will help:

Do's

Things like freshly prepared foods, omega-3 fatty acids, juiced fruit and vegetables and spices like ginger and turmeric are good. You can also add extra virgin olive oil and sweet potato to that list. This is not rocket science - eat fresh food, so your body gets what it needs.

Don'ts

Processed foods should generally be avoided as they are often poor quality. Overconsumption of commercially processed meats, alcohol, dairy, sugary foods, dairy and wheat are also linked with increasing inflammation.





The main elephant in the room connected with diet is being **overweight!**

Extra weight means our bodies are putting more pressure on our spine and joints which causes inflammation and pain.

9 Daily Habits To Stop Back Pain

Just a qualifier - if any of these tips hurt, don't so them. The right thing should be relieving.

1. If you sleep on your back, put a pillow under your knees as it takes the pressure off your back.
2. Strengthening yourself with general exercise at least twice a week will help take the load off of your spine.
3. Increase minerals and vitamin D intake (sunshine is best) together with foods such as yogurt, leafy greens, fatty fish and egg yolks.
4. Check out your footwear and swap heels for comfort. Less than a 1 inch heel is best for your back. If you use custom orthotics, try removing them to see if they are actually helping you.
5. Stand straight and hold a good posture. Avoid rounded shoulders, slouching and standing to one side.
6. If you spend time at a desk, don't slump. Get a good chair with lumbar support and sit up straight with shoulders back.
7. Keep moving. Staying in one place for too long ends up putting pressure on your spine.
8. Lifting too much, and incorrectly, puts excess strain on your back. If you need to lift, distribute the weight. Keep weight close to you and bend your knees to lift.
9. Simply by stretching your back will improve circulation and can ease any aches and strains caused by inactivity.

2. Pain Relief

Medication in moderation

Don't be afraid of medication, especially if it helps you sleep. Your GP can recommend medication if you are in severe pain. As you get treatment, you can come off the medication as your pain becomes manageable. You need to sleep, and medication can help.

We do not recommend long term use or dependency on painkillers.

Potions and Lotions and Pills

Try different things to see if it helps with the pain. Read the instructions!

These include:

- Freeze spray
- Ibuleve
- Tiger Balm
- Deep Heat (etc)
- Anti Inflammatories
- Try to avoid painkillers (Cocodamol etc) unless the pain is very bad.
Then use a painkiller to rest, not to keep going where you could hurt yourself.



3. Exercises To Avoid

Exercise to avoid when you have back pain:

Stop all exercise until you know the underlying cause!

Exercising is an important part of a healthy life. It gives us energy, releases endorphins and clears our minds.

But when you're in pain, you need to slow down or even stop! No injury likes being strained. Imagine you have a sprained ankle. You wouldn't think "the answer to this lies in more exercise".

The wrong exercise could be piling on more problems and misery. So you need to find the cause before you discover the remedy.

Your pain could have been triggered by something sudden, or something that has developed over years based on your activities or lifestyle. Often an underlying cause can be exposed by something sudden.

But, by identifying the underlying causes and the related muscle imbalances, you can find solutions.

Then you can be running, working or participating in whatever you do again.

4. Rest body and mind

Think about those stressful, anxious and tense situations in your life. Then recall how tight the muscles in your neck and back felt.

Our increasingly 'always on' lives that we lead can turn us into balls of stress!

But your body is a wonderful self healer with this simple equation:

Rest + Relaxation + Sleep = Recovery

Rest During The Day

If you sit - stand and stretch.

If you stand - give your feet a rest.

If you can power nap for 15-30 minutes, brilliant! But if you can't, take at least a couple of breaks and let your brain switch off.





Relaxation Methods

We are not talking about watching telly, scrolling through social media or mindless games on your phone.

We are talking about shutting the world out with the likes of meditation or yoga.

Or just keep it simple... Sit cross legged on the floor with a straight back, (if you can, or anything will do that is comfortable), close your eyes and focus on slowing your breathing and relax for 15-20 minutes.

Sleep Glorious Sleep

Sleep is when your body repairs, recharges and regenerates, and we all know how the world is a different place after deep uninterrupted sleep.

To improve your chances, follow these 3 bedtime recommendations:

Don't eat meals before bed

Particularly sugar or grains as they cause a "sugar high" which in turn lowers your blood sugar levels, making sleep harder and worse still, waking you in the middle of the night. Try to eat before 7.00pm.

Don't watch TV right before bed

Your brain is still whirring, making sleep harder to come by. If you need to clear your mind, try reading a book. According to research by sleep boffins, just 6 minutes of reading reduces stress by 68% and prepares you for sleep.

Avoid caffeine and alcohol for better quality sleep

Caffeine drunk in the afternoon can affect you well into the evening, delaying your sleep. Alcohol will make you drowsy, but your sleep is lighter, causing you to wake up and not be able to drop off again. Also, alcohol blocks the deeper stages of sleep where all the healing takes place. If you have a lot of swelling and pain avoid alcohol and spicy foods especially.

5. Understanding Why You Are In Pain & How To Get Relief

You know that wonderful feeling when someone hits the spot during a massage. All the tension and pain just melts away and is replaced by relief.

Here's the reason...

The pain is caused by part of a knotted muscle known as a trigger point making some muscles become too painful to use.

In simple terms, compromised muscles weaken, putting strain on other muscles to compensate and compound the problems.

Muscle knots can cause pain to radiate beyond the trigger point into the surrounding muscles.

Releasing these trigger points breaks this cycle and puts your body back in balance.

Treating A Trigger Point

Easiest is to get help from a partner or friend. Feel carefully where it is painful, using fingertips. Once the trigger point, a little knot, is found, apply moderate pressure for about a minute. You should feel the trigger point relaxing.

This deactivates the trigger and (hopefully) some of the pain melts away.

If the area feels hot and swollen, or if the pain is bad, something could be damaged so don't use this method.

6. Use Back Support While Seated

Think about your seated posture...

Is your spine shaped like a C or an S?

We know the C posture is wrong with curved back and shoulders dropping forward, but the reality is many of us sit that way. It becomes our default posture, then things tighten up and we're stuck.

Investing in a quality chair with back support is a worthwhile investment to help you retrain your sitting posture.

Ask somebody to take a picture of you sitting from the side.

You'll strengthen those underused muscles and redress the imbalances in your posture, and if you're in a desk based job, it's a no brainer. If you work from home, invest in your workstation.

7. Decompress Your Spine

We shrink a centimeter every day and bounce back every night.

It happens virtually every day for our entire lives. We're amazing!

This is caused by the cartilage in our knees and spine compressing during the day as gravity takes effect. When we sleep, we rest and decompress.

It works like this...

Your spine contains jelly-like discs containing fluid that act as shock absorbers within our spine. While we are active during the day, we squeeze the fluid from those discs causing them to shrink. Sometimes this pinches a nerve causing sciatica.

While we sleep, those jelly like discs inflate as the fluid goes back into them, but not all of it.

Bear in mind, just a small increase in the spaces between your spinal discs can enable herniated or bulging discs to ease back from trouble.

How To Decompress Your Spine With A Yoga Block

Before trying this, please be aware that this is at your own risk, and if you have any doubts, you should consult a professional.

When you naturally decompress the spine, the increased spaces between the spinal discs takes the pressure off bulging or herniated discs.

Here's how...

Step 1

Lie on your back on the floor with your knees bent. Then, lift your bottom and slide the block under the base of your spine (by the two dimples), not your lower back.



Step 1a

Now, one at a time, slowly straighten your legs by sliding your heels along the floor and then relax. As this happens you will feel some mild discomfort in your lower back and across the front of your hips. The more you relax, the greater the discomfort.



Step 1b

Lie like this for 60 seconds allowing gravity to act rather like pulling out a concertina. This takes you out of your habitual C shape. Don't do it if it really aggravates the pain you have. Experiment carefully.

Any exercises that pull you forwards should be avoided.

Swimming is usually safest and helps open your spine.

Many of us spend our days bent forwards in a chair. Don't bend forwards or curl up as that weakens your spine more. Once you recover, general exercise is best, it's what we are designed for.

Wear a back support

You can get a wearable back support to help support your back. It works by helping you keep your spine straight. It is like a wide elasticated belt with various tightening straps. As long as you can breathe, keep it done up tight. There are different types, but usually quality comes at a higher price.

If you have tried everything and the pain is severe or will not go away, consult a back specialist. Osteopaths, Physios and Chiropractors know what they are doing with extensive training. They will arrange scans and tests for you if required. If you can't afford private appointments (usually about £80.00), ask your GP to refer you to their musculoskeletal services. If you are near a School of Osteopathy they do treatments by supervised students at much lower fees.

Good luck with it. Remember even if it is bad the vast majority of cases are not medically serious and will get better with the right care. Any worries consult your Doctor. That is what they are there for, to be a gateway to the right specialist.