

Getting Your Back “Back” on Track

“Lift with your legs, not with your back.” We’ve all heard it said a hundred times... and for good reason. It’s a smart bit of advice for anyone interested in avoiding a back injury.

Roughly 65 million Americans suffer from back pain, ranking it among the top reasons for physician visits. In addition to muscle strain caused by improper lifting, you can throw your back out of whack through accidents or sports injuries, or simply by carrying excess body weight.

Back pain can take multiple forms, from a steady aching along the spine to a sharp, localized pain. But fortunately, 95% of cases can be treated without surgery.

There are a variety of remedies for back pain available, ranging from heat wraps and massages to adding more vitamin D to your diet. Often, rest and exercise can provide relief, but for more severe cases, physical therapy may be necessary. Opioids, or “painkillers,” are also an option, but such drugs can be highly addictive, so caution must be taken if used.

If you suffer from persistent back pain, review the symptoms with your family doctor and discuss potential fixes. (If you also have numbness in your arms or legs, seek immediate medical help.) Hopefully, together you’ll find a solution that will have you “back” to your healthy self soon!



Support the Back (and the Body) that Supports You

Your best defense against back pain tomorrow is to practice healthy habits today!

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Exercise regularly, but stretch before and after.
- Practice abdominal crunches to strengthen abdominal muscles, which support your lower back.
- Walk or swim regularly to strengthen your lower back.
- Practice and maintain good posture.
- Wear soft-soled shoes with heels that are less than 1-1/2” high.
- Avoid sitting or standing for extended periods of time.
- Sleep on your side or on your back with a pillow under your knees if you can.
- And one more thing... lift with your legs, not with your back!

SOURCES: WebMD, Sharecare, Prevention