

Top Tips To Treat Low Back Pain

Low back pain is practically a universal problem. The crucial things to remember are that this problem is common (most people get it), painful (incredibly), medically minor (most of the time), and that the cause is nearly always an injury that requires time to heal completely. Medication cannot speed the healing process. If there is any sign of nerve damage, if a fracture might have occurred, or if the pain just won't go away, see the doctor. Sudden pain with minor or no injury occurring a bit higher in the back may represent a collapsed fracture of a vertebrae; this is the most common complication of osteoporosis and is a very frequent problem. This kind of fracture usually requires about six weeks to resolve, and many older people will have several such fractures over time.

The purpose to treat acute low back pain is to prevent chronic, long-lasting low back pain. You want natural healing, and then you want to strengthen the involved parts so that the problem doesn't happen again.

Think of low back problems as similar to a sprained ankle. An injury causes bruising and swelling for two or three days, and then slow healing begins to become evident, even though you cannot see what is actually happening. The pain improves in less than a week, but six weeks is required for full healing. Re-injury is costly, since the healing process will have to start again from the beginning.

Do not take painkillers and muscle relaxation and then go on as if your back were all right, this practice will likely result in re-injury. Either take medication and rest flat in bed, or listen to the pain message and do only what you can do in reasonable comfort.

Don't apply heat to the area the first day; if anything, use cold packs to decrease pain and swelling. Heat may be cautiously applied after the first day, but it won't help much. A firm mattress or a bed board is part of the standard advice. Back problems vary, however, and if you are more comfortable at night and the following morning with a slightly softer mattress, use that. Aspirin or other mild pain relievers are probably all right, but they won't help much. A small pillow or folded towel beneath the low back may increase your comfort when sleeping flat. When you get up, draw your knees up, then roll side-ways and sit up. The position of lying on your side, knees up, is more comfortable than lying on the back for many people, and it is all right.

You doubtless have some accompanying muscle spasms. Although painful, they are protecting your injured back. If you can outlast the discomfort without muscle relaxants and without a lot of pain medication, your back may heal more strongly, and you decrease the chance of re-injury.

Exercises shouldn't be started for a week or so, until things feel much better, and then they should be begun slowly. Exercise is designed to make recurrence less likely by toning the muscles and ligaments so that the spine has greater strength. Abdominal muscles assist spinal stability and should be part of the exercise program. If you have some weight to lose, get started with the weight reduction right away.

Exercises should be repeated twice daily and gradually increased in number and in exertion. Toe-touching, side-bending, and twisting exercises are not particularly good. For the back, you are more interested in strength than in suppleness.

Good posture helps. Sit in a straight chair. Keep your shoulders back and down. Have a good mattress on your head. Lift heavy objects using your legs, not your back. Never lift from a bending forward position. Avoid sudden shifts and strains, particularly those actions that throw the upper body backward. Tennis, for example, should not be rushed as your back recovers. You can safely walk, swim, or bicycle along before it would be safe to resume an activity like tennis.

Adequate calcium in your diet is important to minimize the chance of fractures. If you don't have four servings a day of calcium-rich foods such as non-fat milk or low-fat ice cream, then calcium supplementation is advisable. This is very important for women. Women over 65 should have at least 1,500 mg of calcium daily and men at least 1,000 mg. a glass of milk contains about 250 mg. The best supplementation is calcium carbonate, which is available as Tums, Os-Cal, or other similar brands. Women should discuss the pros and cons of estrogen supplementation with their doctor. Premarin and similar drugs can significantly reduce the chance of osteoporotic fractures.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

Raymond Lee is one of the foremost experts in the health and fitness industry and is the Founder of Bodyfixes Group specializing in body health, muscle development and dieting. He is currently the author of the latest edition of "Neck Exercises and Workouts." Visit <http://www.bodyfixes.com> for more information.