

UNDERSTANDING & MANAGING BACK PAIN: A PHYSIOTHERAPY GUIDE FOR PATIENTS



PERFORMANCE PLUS
Healthcare

WHAT IS BACK PAIN AND HOW TO BEST MANAGE IT

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Matthew Hopkinson has been a Physiotherapist for over 25 years. In that time he has worked in Hospitals, Private Practice and Elite Sporting Organisations. He has successfully treated numerous patients (including himself) with low back pain.

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INTRODUCTION

Back pain is a common complaint that can affect people of all ages. While it's tempting to ignore the discomfort and carry on, untreated back pain can interfere with your daily life and well-being. This simple eBook aims to guide you through the anatomy of back pain, common causes, and how physiotherapy can help in diagnosis and treatment.

1.

ANATOMY OF THE BACK

Vertebral Column



Your spine, or vertebral column, is made up of 33 vertebrae. These bones provide structural support and house the spinal cord—a key component of the nervous system.

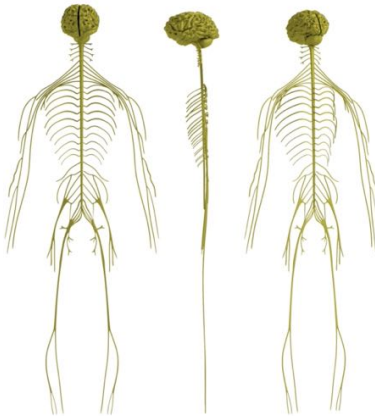
Muscles and Ligaments

Numerous muscles and ligaments in your back work in concert to enable movement and provide stability.



The Role of the Nervous System

The spinal cord facilitates communication between your brain and the rest of the body. Disruption in this communication can manifest as back pain.



2.

COMMON CAUSES OF BACK PAIN

No Reason at All

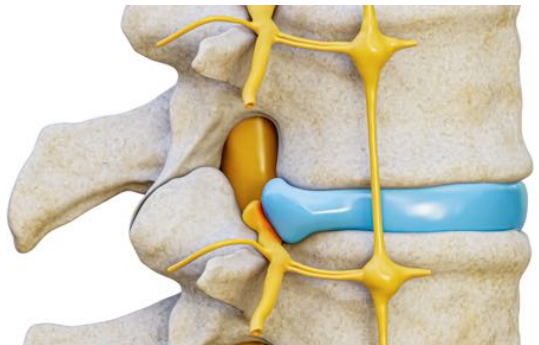
The most common cause of back pain is called non specific low back pain!!

Muscle Strains

Overuse or heavy lifting can strain the muscles and ligaments in your back.

Herniated Discs

A herniated disc occurs when the soft centre of a spinal disc pushes through a crack in the tougher exterior casing.



Sciatica



This nerve pain arises from the compression of the sciatic nerve, often leading to pain radiating from the lower back to the legs.

Degeneration

As we wear out bone may grow into spaces that the nerves run causing impingement to the nerves. This can cause pain, numbness and weakness.

Lifestyle Factors



Poor posture, obesity, and emotional stress are all potential contributors to back pain.

3.

HOW PHYSIOTHERAPY HELPS

Assessment

Your physiotherapist will carry out a comprehensive evaluation to identify the root cause of your back pain.



Treatment Modalities

Depending on your condition, treatments such as manual therapy, taping, electrotherapy, or even dry needling may be recommended.



Education

Your physiotherapist will be able to discuss with you what is going on with your back and help you understand the best path forwards.

Manual Therapies

- **Spinal Manipulation:** A high-velocity thrust that can improve spinal function.

- **Mobilisation:** Gentle joint movements to increase mobility.

Exercise Prescription



A tailored exercise regimen can help strengthen your back and core muscles, improving your posture and relieving pain.

4.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DIAGNOSES

Symptoms to Report

Be prepared to provide a detailed history of your symptoms for a more accurate diagnosis.

Imaging Techniques

In some cases, X-rays, MRIs, or CT scans may be necessary.

Referrals to Other Specialists

In complicated cases, you may be referred to other specialists like orthopaedic surgeons or neurologists.

5.

AT HOME REMEDIES

Stretching

Regular stretching can improve flexibility and alleviate back pain.

Hot and Cold Packs

Both can relieve back pain, but ice packs are generally recommended for fresh injuries, while heat is more for muscle tension.



6.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Ergonomics

Pay attention to your posture when standing or sitting, especially if you work long hours at a desk.

Regular Exercise

A consistent exercise routine can strengthen your back and core muscles, making you less susceptible to back pain.

Healthy Diet and Weight

Maintaining a healthy weight reduces stress on your back.



7.

HOW LONG DOES BACK PAIN USUALLY LAST?

A: The duration varies. Acute back pain can last up to six weeks, while chronic back pain can persist for 12 weeks or more.

8.

CONCLUSION

Back pain can be both physically and emotionally taxing, but understanding its origins and available treatments is the first step towards managing it effectively. A qualified physiotherapist can offer expert advice tailored to your specific condition.

Additional Resources

For more information, consider visiting the following:

- Websites: <https://www.backfitpro.com/>, <https://choose.physio/your-body/lower-back/acute-non-specific-low-back-pain>,
- Books: **Back Up** <https://www.amazon.com.au/Back-Up-treatments-working-offering/dp/1742238084>, **Explain Pain** <https://www.amazon.com.au/Explain-David-Butler-Lorimer-Moseley/dp/0987342665>



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