

Back Pain: How to Manage and Protect It

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Whether it is a breathtaking stab of pain, a nagging pull, or a burning throb in the small of your spine, back pain is one of the most common health problems among adults. Back pain is often caused from repeated stress on your back, rather than the results of a single incident. This comes from excessive forward bending or heavy lifting, sitting or standing too long, impact or twisting athletic activities, and poor posture.

Except for a few instances, such as a car accident or fall, back pain can be preventable by learning how to manage and protect your back.

Correct posture - while sitting, make sure your lower back has enough support.

Prolonged standing - periodically prop one foot up at a time. Also, throughout your work day, slightly bend your knees while standing. This will reduce stress on your back.

Sleeping positions - if you sleep on your back try placing a small pillow under your knees, or on your side with a pillow between your knees. These positions provide the most back support.

Repetitive lifting - make sure you can handle the load. If not, ask for help. Never bend at the waist to pick something up. Always bend at the knees and keep your back straight. Keep the object close to your body and avoid twisting.

Exercise can keep your back healthy. Along with exercise, reduce your stress, which causes muscle tension. Loose weight, because excessive weight puts stress on your spine. Also, stop smoking, because smoking makes it difficult for the blood to deliver oxygen to working tissues, which results in a weak back.

If you experience back pain, seek medical attention. Often, pain is treated with rest, heat and cold applications, medication and physical and occupational therapy. Only the most severe cases require surgery. Keep in mind, a healthy lifestyle means a healthy back.