

A to Z of Backache

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EVERYDAY backache is responsible for thousands of people being absent from work. This simple guide will not only help you to avoid back pain, but if you already have it, to find the treatment you need.

Abdominal muscles must have excellent tone for the back to work efficiently. Lie on your back, with knees slightly apart, bent at 45 degrees, and feet on the floor. Support the head and neck with a pillow and place arms loosely at your side. Pull in tummy and muscles and squeeze buttocks, pressing lower back and waist against the floor. Hold for a count of five, then release slowly and rest for a count of five. Repeat five times. Gradually work up to ten.

Bending incorrectly is the prime cause, and if bending for a long period, stand up and bend backwards five (or) six times every five minutes to restore the lumbar curve.

Complementary medicine can be used in place of, or alongside, the conventional kind and includes Alexander Technique, Osteopathy, Chiropractic, and Reflexology.

Diathermy includes a general feeling of warmth. The Electromagnetic waves producing heat in the body tissues yield beneficial results over a long period.

Emotion plays a vital role in everyday life. Research has shown that pain can be intensified if you are angry, bored, insecure, depressed or stressed.

Fatigue may be largely emotional. Consider if stress and tension are partly to blame for your backache.

Gym exercise can benefit your back, with specialized equipment and the stimulus of other people to keep you at it.

Holidays can be a great tonic. But check if the hotel bed is suitable for your back. Swimming or other exercise can be dangerous if you haven't done it since your last holiday. Don't expose the back to sudden extremes of temperature, such as lying on an air bed in water after sunbathing.

Inactivity weakens muscles, leaving them vulnerable to injury. Find a programme of exercises which suits you.

Jacuzzis are a lovely way of treating your own back like hydrotherapy in health spas. A jet of warm water directed at a stiff, sore area is painful initially, but increases the circulation, relaxes muscles and helps mobility.

Kneeling is a very comfortable position, while making the bed, or weeding the garden, and it will help to avoid back strain.

Lifting heavy things is a major cause, and it may lead to a Disc Degeneration.

Meditation can help sufferers. Self-Hypnosis is more helpful in alleviating backache.

Naturopathy claims to eliminate disease by building up the body's own defences and self-healing powers.

Overweight people often suffer from pain in weight-carrying joints, which can increase the rate of degeneration.

Pubs may be relaxing (in cases of medical requirement) but a high

bar-stool can be a hazard.

Quadriceps muscles in the front of the thigh have to be strengthened to help the back in many movements.

Reflexology is massage of Hands and Feet, where certain points reflect each organ of the body, helpful in painful back and headaches also.

Standing correctly is important, and stress on the back may be greater in the sitting position. So avoid standing (or) sitting for a prolonged period. When standing for any length of time rest one foot on a small stool or box to relieve lumbar lordosis. And while sitting maintain back support.

TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation) is a portable pain-reduction device. A non-invasive procedure, but it should be withdrawn when pain subsides.

Ultra-sound helps to alleviate back pain by increasing blood circulation.

Vitamins and minerals keep the body efficient. Calcium is essential for the upkeep of bones, and vitamin D increases the absorption of calcium.

Writing slope : An angled desk gives the eyes and the back a much better distance/angle relationship than a horizontal surface.

X-rays will show up bone and joint damage but the damages to soft tissues like intervertebral discs can be diagnosed by MRI, Myelography, CT Scan.

Yoga exercises create muscle strength, and endurance, and helps to avoid backache.

Zone therapy uses pressure massage, which can relieve discomfort.