



Self-Care for Low Back Pain

Most people have low back pain now and then. In many cases, it isn't serious and self-care can help. Sometimes low back pain can be a sign of a bigger problem. Call your doctor if your pain returns often or gets worse over time. For the long-term care of your back, get regular exercise, lose any excess weight and learn good posture.

Take a Short Rest

Rest your back for a day or two to begin healing. Use a firm mattress or the floor. Have your lower back firmly supported with a small pillow or towel. Keep your knees slightly bent, with another pillow under them. Every few hours, get up and walk as much as you can.



Reduce Pain and Swelling

Cold reduces swelling. Both cold and heat can reduce pain. Protect your skin by placing a towel between your body and the ice or heat source.

- For the first few days, apply an ice pack for 10-15 minutes every hour while you're awake.
- After the first few days, try heat to ease pain.
- Over-the-counter medications can help control pain and swelling. Try tylenol or an NSAID substitute, such as ibuprofen.

Notes

Call Your Doctor If:

- You're unable to stand or walk.
- You have a temperature over 101.0°.
- You have frequent, painful, or bloody urination.
- You have severe abdominal pain.
- You have a sharp, stabbing pain.
- Your pain is constant.
- You have pain or numbness in your leg.
- You feel pain in a new area of your back.
- You notice that the pain isn't decreasing after more than a week.

Exercise

Exercise can help your back heal. It also helps your back get stronger and more flexible, preventing any reinjury. Ask your doctor about specific exercises for your back.

Use Good Posture to Avoid Reinjury

- When moving, bend at the hips and knees. Don't bend at the waist or twist around.
- When lifting, keep the object close to your body. Don't try to lift more than you can handle.
- When sitting, keep your lower back supported. Use a rolled-up towel as needed.

