



## Relieving Back Pain

Back pain is a common problem. You can strain back muscles by lifting too much weight or just by moving the wrong way. Back strain can be uncomfortable, even painful. And it can take weeks to heal. To help yourself feel better and prevent future back strains, try the tips on this handout.

**Important Note:**  
Do not give aspirin to children or teens.

### Ice

Ice reduces muscle pain and swelling. It helps most during the first 24 to 48 hours after an injury.

- Wrap an ice pack or a bag of frozen peas in a dishcloth. (Never place ice directly on your skin.)
- Place the ice where your back hurts the most.
- Don't ice for more than 20 minutes at a time.
- You should use ice several times a day.



**Ice helps most during the first day or two after an injury.**

### Medications

Over-the-counter pain relievers include aspirin, acetaminophen, and ibuprofen. They can help ease discomfort. Some also reduce swelling.

- Tell your doctor about any medications you are already taking.
- Take medications only as directed.



**A warm shower can relax sore muscles.**

### Heat

After the first 48 hours, heat can relax sore muscles and improve blood flow.

- Try a warm bath or shower. Or use a heating pad set on low. To prevent a burn, keep a cloth between you and the heating pad.
- Don't use a heating pad for more than 15 minutes at a time. Never sleep on a heating pad.

## Notes