



Parent Information: Back Pain



Cork Emergency Medicine

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Lower Back Pain

Lower back pain can be tension, stiffness or soreness in your lower back. Lower back pain is a very common problem and seldom due to any serious disease. It's often caused by a simple muscle, tendon or ligament strain/sprain. Back pain will usually improve after a few days or weeks (6- 12 weeks) so you can return to your normal activity.

What you can do to help?

Staying mobile:

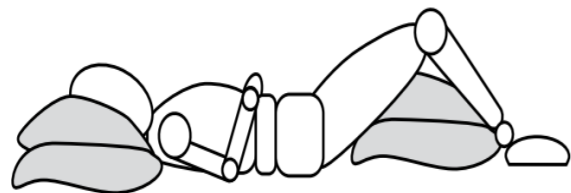
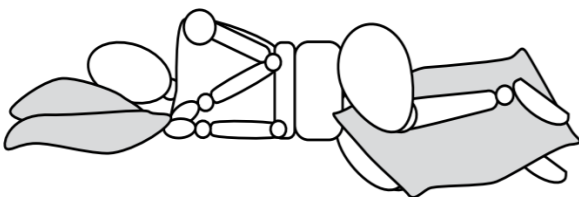
Prolonged bed rest is not advised. You should avoid long periods in sitting or standing and change positions often. In other words keep moving, short walks frequently during the day which can be gradually increased as you improve. You may need to avoid or limit heavy lifting and twisting in the early stages of your back pain

Pain Relief:

- Painkillers: Take them regularly as prescribed by doctor or advised by pharmacist.
- Heat: Applying a heat pack to the affected area for 10- 20 minutes can help relief pain. You can use a reusable heat pad, hot water bottle or microwaveable heat bag (check your skin regularly, do not apply directly to skin).
- Ice: An ice pack or frozen vegetables can be applied to the area (check your skin regularly, not directly to skin) for 10 -15 minutes. Both heat and ice techniques can be done hourly.

Positioning:

Try the sleeping positions below and sleep in the most comfortable position



Exercise

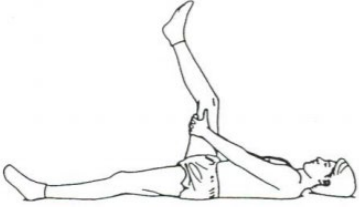


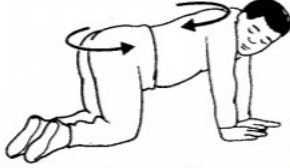


Exercise is the most important way that you can help yourself if you have back pain. Research shows that regular exercise leads to shorter and less frequent episodes of back pain. Start slowly and

If you are concerned, please contact the Emergency Department you first attended:	Mercy University Hospital (021) 230 5011	M-UCC at SMHC (St. Mary's Health Campus) (021) 4926900	CUH (021) 4920200	Local Injury Unit Mallow General Hospital (022) 58506	Bantry General Hospital (027) 52900
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gradually increase the amount of exercise you do. Swimming, walking, yoga, pilates or going to a gym are all suitable types of exercise. Below are sample stretch exercises;

Note: Perform the exercises slowly. You may feel a slight stretch but if the exercise increases your pain stop and move to the next one. Perform exercises 2-3 times daily;

 <p>Pull thigh towards chest. You should feel stretch back of thigh. Hold for 30 seconds, repeat both sides</p>	 <p>Pull knee towards chest, you should feel stretch in hip. Hold for 20 seconds and repeat three times on each leg</p>
 <p>Flatten back into floor by tightening stomach and bottom muscles. Hold ten seconds and repeat ten times</p>	 <p>On all fours keeping back straight. Move hips from side to side (like wagging a tail). Repeat ten times</p>
 <p>Cat/Cow stretch – start by humping your back and then dropping to make an arch. Repeat 15 times</p>	 <p>Lying on back with knees together, roll your knees from side to side as far as pain free. Repeat ten times</p>

Seek Medical Advice

See a doctor straight away if you develop any of the following symptoms;

- Difficulty passing urine
- Loss of control of your bladder or bowels
- Numbness around your back passage or genitals
- Severe weakness, numbness or unsteadiness in your legs
- Very severe and ongoing back pain that gets worse over several weeks

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