



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A GUIDE TO WOMEN WITH LOW BACK PAIN

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ABSTRACT

About 80 percent of adults experience low back pain at some point in their lifetimes. It is the most common cause of job-related disability and a leading contributor to missed work days. Vast majority of low back pains are mechanical in nature. In many cases, low back pain is associated with spondylosis, a term that refers to the general degeneration of the spine associated with normal wear and tear that occurs in the joints, discs, and bones of the spine as people get older. Recurring back pain resulting from improper body mechanics is often preventable and minimized by avoiding movements that jolt or strain the back, maintaining correct posture, and lifting objects properly. Many work-related injuries are caused or aggravated by stressors such as heavy lifting, contact stress (repeated or constant contact between soft body tissue and a hard or sharp object), vibration, repetitive motion, and awkward posture. Using ergonomically designed furniture and equipment to protect the body from injury at home and in the workplace may reduce the risk of back injury. In this module, authors have provided background, etiology, risk factors and prevention of back pain. Adopting correct postures is the key to manage backache. We have demonstrated correct postures with the help of eleven colour pictures.

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INTRODUCTION

Low back pain is very common. It affects 4 out of 5 people at some time during their lives. It is the leading cause of disability for those aged 19 to 45 and is the second most common cause of missed workdays for adults younger than 45 years of age. According to one study, almost 80 percent of people in modern industrial society will experience back pain at some time during their life. Fortunately, in 10 percent of these, it subsides within a month. But in as many as 70 percent of these, the pain recurs. (NIH, 2017) Various studies have shown that the incidence of back pain is more in women than in men. Back pain is more common in women who have had several pregnancies. Lack of exercise, leading to poor muscle tone and nutritional osteomalacia are contributory factors in these patients. In the present module, 11 colour pictures have been utilized to demonstrate the correct posture to be adopted to prevent back pain.

What is Back Pain?

Pain felt in your lower back may come from the spine, muscles, nerves, or other structures in that region. It may also radiate from other areas like your mid or upper back, a hernia in the groin, or a problem in the ovaries, uterus and other neighboring structures or organs. (Web, 2017) You may feel a variety of symptoms if you've hurt your back. You may have a tingling or burning sensation, a dull ache or sharp pain. You also may experience weakness in your legs or feet. It won't necessarily be one event that actually causes your pain. You may have been doing many things improperly, like standing, sitting, or lifting for a long time. Then suddenly, one simple movement, like reaching for something in the shelf or bending from your waist, leads to the feeling of pain. (Mayoclinic, 2015) If you are like most people, you will have at least once backache in your life. While such pain or discomfort can happen anywhere in your back, the most common area affected is your low back. This is because the low back supports most of your body's weight. Most back problems will get better on their own. The key is to know when you need to seek medical help and when self-care measures alone will allow you to get better. Web, 2017; Mayoclinic, 2015) Low back pain may be acute (short-

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term), lasting less than one month, or chronic (long-term, continuous, ongoing), lasting longer than three months, getting acute back pain more than once is common. (NIH, 2017; The New York Times, 2014)

Alternative Names:

Backache; Low back pain; Lumber pain; Pain – back (Web, 2017; Mayo clinic, 2015; The New York Times, 2014)

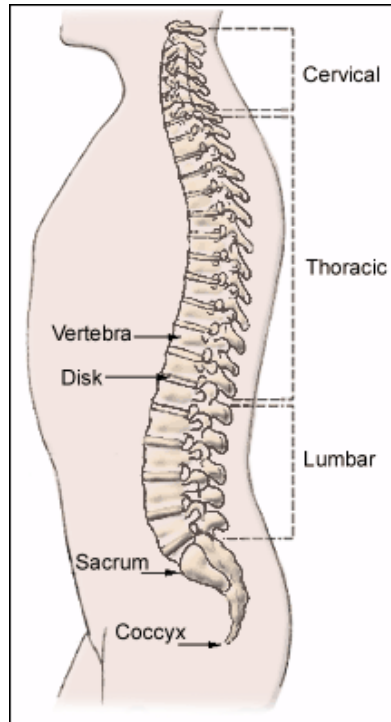


Fig.1.

Why do you feel back pain?

- Self tissue strain, like sitting or standing in same position for a long time.
- Frequent lifting with twisted spine (back bone).
- Exposure to sedentary life style & obesity.
- Small fractures to the spine (back bone) from osteoporosis (weakness in the bone due to age)
- Muscle spasm (very tense muscles that remain contracted)
- Ruptured or herniated disk, disk degeneration (wear and tear of back bone)
- Poor alignment of the vertebrae
- Spinal stenosis (narrowing of the back bone canal)
- Strain or tears to the muscles or ligaments supporting the back
- Scoliosis or kyphosis (abnormal back bone curvature) (Web, 2017; Mayo clinic, 2015; Wikipedia. Backache [Internet]. 2017)

What else is associated with back pain?

- Back pain can present anywhere from the base of the neck to the buttocks.
- It can be referred from any other part of the body served by the same nerve root.
- Low back pain associated with gynecological problems never reach beyond lumbar area.

- Mechanical back pain results from over use of spine, muscle fatigue, direct or indirect injury. Stress or degenerative changes of spine.
- Back pain sometimes results in associated leg pain.
- Stress and strain may cause back pain. (Web, 2017; Mayo clinic, 2015; The New York Times. Low backache [Internet]. 2014)

You are at risk if?

- Work in construction or another job requiring heavy lifting, lots of bending and twisting, of whole body, vibration (like truck driving or using a sandblaster).
- Have bad posture.
- Are pregnant.
- Are over age 30.
- Smoke, don't exercise, or are overweight.
- Have arthritis or osteoporosis.
- Have a low pain threshold.
- Feel stressed or depressed. (Web, 2017; Mayo clinic, 2015; Wikipedia. Backache [Internet]. 2017; The New York Times. Low backache [Internet]. 2014)

You are most at risk for back pain if?

- Your job requires frequent bending and lifting.
- You must twist your body when lifting and carrying an object.
- You must lift and carry in a hurry. (Web, 2017; Mayo clinic, 2015; Wikipedia. Backache [Internet]. 2017; The New York Times. Low backache [Internet]. 2014)

Know your Spine (Back bone)

The vertebral column is divided into the following five regions – cervical (Neck portion of back bone), thoracic (back portion of the chest), lumbar (Waist portion of back bone), sacral and coccygeal (lower back bone) as shown in the Figure 1. (Web, 2017; Mayo clinic, 2015; Wikipedia. Backache [Internet]. 2017; The New York Times. Low backache [Internet]. 2014)

Why do you need medicine to relieve pain?

- It stimulates or sedate by both local and general relaxation
- It increases local blood supply by arterial dilatation
- Skin and subcutaneous tissues are massaged; this has a stretching and softening effect particularly on fibrous tissue.
- It will give you relief of pain and swelling.
- By taking this oil, you will be pain free which ultimately will improve your quality of life. (Web, 2017; Mayo clinic, 2015; Wikipedia. Backache [Internet]. 2017; The New York Times. Low backache [Internet]. 2014)

How to prevent back pain

Adopting the correct postures reduce pain and halt further abnormality in spine curvature. (Web, 2017; Mayo clinic, 2015; Wikipedia. Backache [Internet]. 2017; The New York Times. Low backache [Internet]. 2014)

Correct postures



(A)



(B)

Fig. 2.

Sleeping postures

- If you have trouble in sleeping, sleep on your back with a pillow under your knees or sleep on your side with your knees bent and a pillow in between your knees.
- Use an appropriate sized pillow for your neck. It should neither be too thick or too thin. (Web, 2017; Mayo clinic, 2015; Wikipedia. Backache [Internet]. 2017; The New York Times. Low backache [Internet]. 2014)



Fig. 3.

Standing posture

If you stand for long periods, rest one foot on a low stool and try to stand in straight position



Fig. 4.

Carrying load: Always try to carry loads equal in both hands.³



Fig. 5.

Sitting posture

- Use a chair with good lower back support and keep your feet on a low stool.
- If you must sit for long periods, rest your feet on the floor or on a low stool, whichever is comfortable. (Web, 2017; Mayo clinic, 2015; Wikipedia. Backache [Internet]. 2017; The New York Times. Low backache [Internet]. 2014)

Hollow Hump Position: In cat position round and hollow your back alternatively. (Mayo clinic, 2015)

Wall squats: Stand against wall and bend your knees and then straighten up keeping your back sliding against the wall. (Mayo clinic. Backache [Internet]. 2015; Wikipedia. Backache [Internet]. 2017)

Gluteal muscle stretch (buttock muscles): Stretching your buttock muscles to keep your muscles of back relaxed. (WebMD. Backache [Internet]. 2017; MayoClinic. Backache [Internet]. 2015; Wikipedia. Backache [Internet]. 2017; The New York Times. Low backache [Internet]. 2014)



(A)



(B)

Fig. 8.

Bridging: Lying on your back with bent knees to lift your back and then relax. (Mayoclinic. Backache [Internet]. 2015; Wikipedia. Backache [Internet]. 2017)



(A)



(B)

Fig. 10.

Trunk Rotation: Keeping your upper body straight, rotate your trunk in right and left side. (Wikipedia. Backache [Internet]. 2017; The New York Times. Low backache [Internet]. 2014)



(A)



(B)

Fig. 9

Spinal Extension: Extend your spine (back bone) on relaxed elbow. (Mayoclinic. Backache [Internet]. 2015)



(A)



(B)

Fig. 11.



(A)



(B)

Fig. 12.

Note

- Each exercise should be done 5 times for 5 seconds.
- Exercise regularly to keep the muscles that support your back strong and flexible.
- Don't slouch, poor posture puts a strain on your back muscles.
- Maintain your proper body weight to avoid straining your back muscles.
- Keep a positive attitude about your job and home life; studies showed that persons who are unhappy at work and home tend to have more back problems and take longer to recover than persons who have a positive attitude.
- Wear comfortable low-heeled shoes.
- Make sure that your work surface is at comfortable height for you.
- If you must drive for long distances use a pillow or rolled up towel behind the small of your back. Also be

sure that you stop often and walk around for a few minutes.

- If you don't get relief from pain, even with using all precautions, get your medical/ orthopedic/ gynecological check-up done to rule out any other disease or illness. (Web, 2017; MayoClinic, 2015; Wikipedia. Backache [Internet]. 2017; The New York Times. Low backache [Internet]. 2014)

Modify your working / Home environment

- Chairs and car seats should have good lumbar support
- Chair height should allow knees to flex to take the pull off the muscles (situated in the back of thighs), support the thighs and also allow the feet to rest comfortably on the floor.
- Desk and table height should be adequate to keep the person comfortable.
- Mattresses should provide firm support. If it is too soft, the person sags & stresses ligaments, if it is too firm, some persons cannot relax.
- Pillows should be of a comfortable height & density.
- Pain that occurs in the morning is often related to sleeping posture. (Web, 2017; MayoClinic, 2015; Wikipedia. Backache [Internet]. 2017; The New York Times. Low backache [Internet]. 2014)

How to improve quality of life?

- Adopt correct posture and do regular exercises and walk.
- Pay attention to your diet by avoiding excessive fat and junk food. Eat lots of green leafy vegetables. Increase your water intake (at least 8-10 glasses per day). Eat seasonal fruits and vegetables.
- Use Roghan-e-Baboon when you feel the pain is not relieved by Exercise.
- Consult Physician in case of persistent pain or aggressive pain.
- Improve your quality of life by saying no to tobacco, soft and hard drinks. (Web, 2017; MayoClinic, 2015; Wikipedia. Backache [Internet]. 2017; The New York Times. Low backache [Internet]. 2014)

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