



Top ten tips to beat back pain

Your back pain solved

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## Your back pain solved

We understand how frustrating a bad back can be and the anxiety it causes in doing the simple things. Nobody should have to put up with ineffective treatment or put their life on hold because of back pain.

Here at Sundial we have over 30 years' experience and have successfully treated thousands of people for back pain. We know what works and what doesn't. Here are our top tips to solve back pain and sciatica. These tips have proven effective in ridding thousands of people of their suffering.

1. Read these tips
2. Identify two or three to work on
3. Get started on transforming your back

If after following this advice you are still getting back pain or stiffness call us for a free consultation.

Most back pain gets better within a couple of weeks, but four out of five people go on to develop recurrent pain and stiffness as the body struggles to adapt to the underlying, uncorrected problem. Your back pain must be cured quickly to prevent it from becoming a chronic, permanent worry. That means that you are likely to have further pain over the coming years if you don't do something about it now.

The good news is that some simple steps at home and at work will help you sort out your problem and have a fit and healthy back.

# 1 Get more exercise

You must stay active even if it hurts a bit. Strange but true. It is true that if you avoid exercise or moving around for fear of making the problem worse, you only prolong the pain. Any general exercise is good but walking, swimming, cycling, yoga and Pilates are the best. Workouts in the gym or, if you are reasonably fit, even running can help. Choose one or more that appeals and commit to doing it three or four times a week. Lots of research points to exercise as being essential to avoid back pain. Recent studies have shown that exercise works well, manipulation works better but both combined is best.

Exercise not only strengthens muscles and improves flexibility but raises the pain threshold so you feel less pain. Interestingly it also improves mood, a critical factor in back pain.

It does not matter what time of day you exercise but if you feel stiffer in the mornings it is ideal to exercise then. Start slowly with a warm-up. Marching up and down on the spot for a minute or so is excellent. Stop any exercise if you feel severe pain, but generally, a bit of soreness is OK and not a reason to stop. If you feel more sore over several days and you are worried, ease up on the exercising by doing less or doing it often.

The deep abdominal and back muscles support the spine, keeping the body stable and balanced. They act like an internal corset, and when weak, the back is not supported properly and joint problems can occur. This is called core stability. Pilates and yoga are excellent at working the core stability muscles. Tailored exercise routines and classes are recommended and available here at Sundial.

What are the benefits?

- relief of pain and tension
- flatter abdominal muscles
- better posture
- increased flexibility, agility, mobility
- enhanced performance increased circulation
- stronger, leaner muscles

You can join a class, watch an online video or ask us to show you a few exercises.

## 2 Get a new mattress

Old, saggy mattresses can make pain worse - and so can overly firm ones. Research evidence suggests that sleeping on a medium-firm mattress can improve low-back pain, and result in less daytime pain and disability, and cut down the use of painkilling drugs. Different types of mattress have an influence too. For example, a memory foam mattress may be better than a conventional one.

## 3 Get a course of massage

A few studies have shown that massage can help back pain. Massage, when compared to other active treatments, shows that it is similar to exercises, and is superior to relaxation therapy, physiotherapy, acupuncture and self-care education. One study showed that reflexology on the feet had no effect on pain and functioning. The beneficial effects of massage in patients with chronic low-back pain lasted at least one year after the end of the treatment. Our massage therapists here at Sundial will quickly release tight back muscles and get you active again.

## 4 Get some acupuncture

There is fairly good evidence that acupuncture is more effective than no treatment for short-term pain relief. There is strong evidence that acupuncture can be a useful supplement to other forms of conventional therapy for nonspecific low back pain. We carry out acupuncture type needling for back pain here at Sundial.

## 5 Take medication

Anti-Inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen (Nurofen) is recommended for early use. If you are still having pain, your GP may prescribe something stronger. If you have any other health condition, or you have been taking over the counter medication for more than two weeks, and you are not getting better, you should see your GP first, as all these drugs can have adverse effects.

## 6 Get a new car

Not the cheapest option on this list! But if you drive more than ten hours a week you are more likely to get back pain, especially if your car seat is uncomfortable. The older the car, the more likely it is that the seat will be unsupportive. Smaller cars frequently have the steering wheel and pedals offset towards the middle causing a twist in the spine and muscle imbalance.

A car seat should be adjustable for tilt and height as well as forwards and backwards. The back should be angled backwards at about 100° and should have adjustable lumbar support for height and depth. Armrests have been shown to help reduce pressure on the back too.

## 7 Get a new job

Again, not the easiest thing to change quickly but a demanding job means that you are more likely to get back pain and to recover less well too. Low job satisfaction leads to an increased risk of a new episode of low back pain, especially if your job involves lifting, pulling or pushing objects of at least 12kg, or if you have prolonged periods of standing or walking. Risks are, in general, higher in women, for a first-ever episode of back pain.

## 8 Give up smoking

Smoking regularly is associated with low back pain so there is another reason to give up. Besides more back pain, smoking is associated with a higher risk of disc degeneration. Smoking leads to malnutrition of the spinal discs which, in turn, makes them more vulnerable to mechanical stress, a possible cause of disc wear and osteoarthritis.

## 9 Avoid stress

Easy to say when life is hectic and you are worried about your back. But back pain is rarely as dangerous as the pain suggests. It mostly gets better fairly quickly and is rarely due to anything serious. People who are optimistic about the outcome, get better quicker and are less likely to have a recurrence. Psychologists who study this sort of thing have coined a phrase to describe those who think the problem is worse than it is, they

“catastrophise” their pain. If you want to know how to reduce stress ask us about our free mindfulness relaxation audio programme.

## 10 See a chiropractor

The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) recommend manipulation, as done by chiropractors, for back pain. The latest guidelines examine all the treatments for back pain and only endorse the ones that have been shown to work.

It may come as a pleasant surprise that a lot can be done to resolve your back pain - even if you have been told that you will “just live to live with it”. If you have tried some of the things on this list without success, don’t worry. There will be other things that can help. If you have tried everything then book a free Back Review with us to discuss the alternatives. There are many more things that may help you, and we will know what to suggest next.

Contact us to book a free consultation

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