

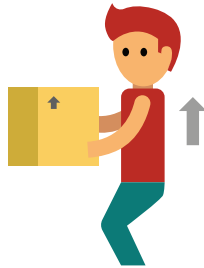
LOW BACK PAIN QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Almost everyone has low back pain at one time or another. Fortunately for most people, episodes of back pain are brief. The pain goes away gradually over a few weeks. If your back pain is keeping you from working, it may help to know that most people with back pain are able to return to their jobs quickly. Very few people end up suffering for very long or are permanently unable to work. Low back pain is usually not serious, gets better within a few weeks, and should not keep you from being active for long.

Here are some important tips if you suffer from low back pain:

Lifting

DO



- ▶ DO lift and carry objects close to your body.
- ▶ DO bend your knees as you lift—make your legs do the hard work, not your back.
- ▶ DO turn with your feet as you lift.
- ▶ DO know your own strength. Only lift as much as you can handle comfortably.

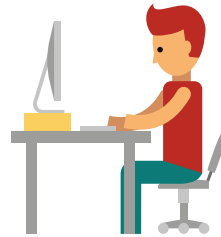
DON'T



- ▶ DON'T lift objects away from your body, with arms outstretched.
- ▶ DON'T lift with your legs straight.
- ▶ DON'T lift and twist in one motion.
- ▶ DON'T lift objects that are too heavy for you.

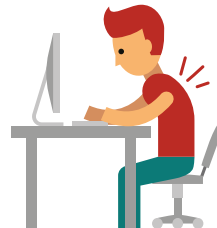
Sitting

DO



- ▶ DO sit in an upright chair with your knees level with or higher than, your hips. Keep your ears, shoulders, and hips in a vertical line.
- ▶ DO sit with a rolled-up towel or other support behind your lower back.
- ▶ DO stretch and walk around after 30 minutes of sitting.

DON'T



- ▶ DON'T slouch in your chair.
- ▶ DON'T sit without back support.
- ▶ DON'T sit for long periods of time.

Standing

DO



- ▶ DO put one foot on a low box or stool. Switch feet every few minutes.
- ▶ DO have your work surface at a comfortable height.

DON'T



- ▶ DON'T slouch while standing.
- ▶ DON'T constantly have your weight on one foot.
- ▶ DON'T let hips stick out to one side.

Sleeping

DO



- ▶ DO use a firm mattress or put a board beneath your mattress to add support.
- ▶ DO sleep on your back with a pillow under your knees.
- ▶ DO sleep on your side with your knees bent and a pillow between them.
- ▶ DO practice good body mechanics.

DON'T



- ▶ DON'T sleep on a too-soft mattress.
- ▶ DON'T stay in bed too long.
- ▶ DON'T sleep on your stomach.

KEEP MOVING:

It's natural to want to avoid using your back when it hurts. However, for most types of back pain, inactivity—especially bed rest—has been shown to do more harm than good. Bed rest can slow the healing process and make your muscles weaker, tighter and more painful.