



MSK + together

An integrated MSK service for Mid-Nottinghamshire

Back Pain

So, you have back pain?

This is a guide on what you can do to help with your back pain. It has been brought to you by MSK Together healthcare professionals such as First Contact Practitioners, physiotherapists, advanced clinical practitioners, exercise instructors, GPs, and consultants. We work together in Mid-Nottinghamshire to provide you with the support and treatment you need, when you need it.



Back pain can affect anybody at any time...

Most people will experience back pain at some point in their lives. It can start at any age, it can come on suddenly or gradually, and it can get better completely or can come and go over years. Some people experience pain in their back, and others have back pain that goes down their legs. Some people feel they can manage with some movement and pain killers and others need more specialist help to understand their pain and develop ways to cope and feel more positive.

WHAT COULD BE CAUSING MY BACK PAIN?

There are lots of things that can lead to back pain. People often associate back pain with things like driving, using computers, posture and lifting. A lot of back pain begins with simple everyday movements and can be related to being inactive or doing an activity your body is not used to. Being stressed, tired or feeling down can make back pain seem worse.

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT MY BACK PAIN?

Back pain can be very painful and quite scary, and it is natural to try and rest and lie down when things hurt. But it is important to get active again as soon as you can, so start gradually. Your back is strong and designed to move – it **needs** to move to stay strong and healthy, just like any other part of your body. Don't worry if it is uncomfortable to start with, remember hurt doesn't mean harm. Movement might include gentle stretches, some strengthening exercises, but importantly doing things you enjoy.

Be aware of how you are feeling. Feeling down, tired or stressed could make your pain feel worse, so being aware of this can help. It can be useful to talk to others like friends or family members. If you can explain how back pain affects your life you might find that others are going through similar things and offer you support.

If you have had to take time off work, talk to your workplace about how you can get back to work as soon as possible, maybe with a fit note that advises gradual return with shorter hours or lighter duties to start.

DO I NEED PAIN MEDICINES?

Pain medicines are not a cure for back pain. Talk to your pharmacist, doctor, physiotherapist, or nurse about which pain medicine to choose in the short term to help you to get moving again. Long term and regular use of pain medicines could cause harm, so remember – exercise works better.

DO I NEED TESTS?

Your doctor or health care professional can assess you properly by listening to you and by examining you. Understanding your back pain in this way is usually enough to work out how best to help you without doing further tests. It is much more important than a scan. The back is made up of bones, discs, ligaments and nerves and any of these can be the source of pain, often in combination. This doesn't always show up on tests, so what's important now is that you invest your energy into helping yourself to get better.

THINGS TO REMEMBER...

- **Low back pain can be scary but it's rarely dangerous.**
- **Scans rarely show the cause of low back pain.**
- **Long term use of pain medicines could cause you harm, so remember – exercise works better.**
- **Pain with exercise and movement doesn't mean you are doing harm.**
- **Staying active and keeping up with a daily routine, including work, will help your recovery.**

GETTING STARTED...

It is a good idea to first think about what your back pain is stopping you from doing. Use the information in this leaflet to think about what might be contributing to your back pain. Then you can start to plan what you need to do to get back to doing the things that are important to you.

WHY HAS MY BACK PAIN LASTED FOR MONTHS?

If your back pain is not getting better and your doctor or physiotherapist has reassured you there is no underlying spinal condition, then you are not alone. Many people find pain continues long after the first episode and it is still stopping them doing the things they'd like to do or enjoyed doing before the back pain.

If you feel that things aren't going according to plan you can see a First Contact Practitioner Physiotherapist at your GP practice. Or, you can pick up a self-referral form from your practice reception and refer yourself to the MSK Together physiotherapy service. Our MSK physiotherapists work together with General Practice, consultants and other health care professionals to help you get back on track.

For more information and how to understand more about your back pain please access the resources below:

You might find this YouTube video useful

Web address: <https://youtu.be/BOjTegn9RuY>

Or scan this QR code:



Some back pain information from Versus Arthritis

Web address: <https://www.versusarthritis.org/media/23104/back-pain-information-booklet.pdf>

Or scan this QR code:



If you are feeling low, anxious, stressed or unable to cope, Insight IAPT are here to help:

Web address: <https://www.insightiapt.org/>

Or scan this QR code:



The advice contained in this leaflet is based on the Digital-startback-leaflet-03.02.20.pdf (keele.ac.uk) and you can also experience this leaflet in augmented reality

- Download Zappar for **free** from you app store



- Scan the Zapcode then aim at the whole image



Watch it come to life!