

Low Back Pain

Low back pain is very common in adults, particularly those aged between 40 and 60. Luckily, most people can recover within six weeks.



Signs and symptoms

- Tension, pain and stiffness around the back.
- The pain can radiate to the buttocks and legs causing numbness or tingling sensation called sciatica.

Common causes of low back pain

Low back pain can be defined into two major types: acute and chronic. There are various causes of low back pain with different spinal structures being affected.

ACUTE LOW BACK PAIN

Common Causes:
Injury, accident or poor manual handling skills

Strained Muscle

Back muscles are overloaded or overstretched by lifting heavy objects or by an unexpected twisting force.

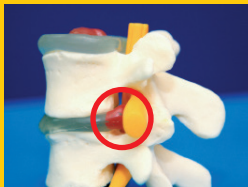


Strained Ligament

Sudden movements, such as a fall or poor lifting technique can cause strained ligaments as the muscles may not have enough time to contract properly to protect the spine, causing ligaments to overstretch or tear.

Slipped Disc

The jelly-like intervertebral disc can be squeezed out by sudden heavy lifting or twisting. This puts pressure on the spinal cord compressing the nerve roots and causes symptoms of back pain.



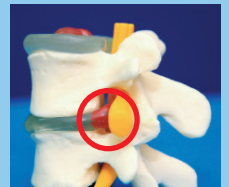
Low back pain, sciatica

CHRONIC LOW BACK PAIN

Common Causes:
Degeneration due to ageing or prolonged poor posture

Discogenic pain / Herniated disc

The jelly-like intervertebral disc can be squeezed out by prolonged poor posture. This puts pressure on the spinal cord compressing the nerve roots and causes pain.

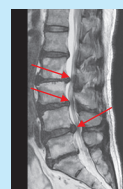
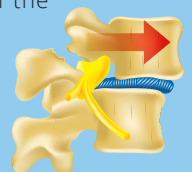


Lumbar Spondylosis

The spine degenerates due to ageing or prolonged poor posture. The intervertebral disc space becomes narrow and the soft tissues surrounding the facet joints are thickened and calcified, forming osteophytes. These will compress the spinal nerves and cause symptoms of back pain.

Spondylolisthesis

When one vertebra slips forward on the adjacent vertebrae, this will result in both a gradual deformity of the lumbar spine and a narrowing of the vertebral canal. It can also be caused by degeneration of the spine, poor posture or congenital defect.



Spinal Stenosis

The narrowing of the spinal canal is commonly caused by bone or disc degeneration. This can cause weakness in your extremities as narrowing often results in pressure on the spinal cord or nerves.

OTHER FACTORS:

Obesity, stress, osteoporosis and cancers

What can I do if I have low back pain?

Rest

The first step in the treatment of low back pain is to let the spine rest. This reduces the muscle spasm and helps the healing process. Avoid lifting, twisting and physical exertion.

Ice or Heat

An ice pack is usually used soon after an acute injury such as back strain. After that, applications of heat packs can help ease much of the discomfort associated with the muscle spasm causing the low back pain. Use either of these regularly for 15 minutes each time.



Warning Signs

Most episodes of back pain last a few days and are completely resolved within a few weeks. However, there are also a few warning signs that may indicate an immediate medical attention:

- back pain that persists beyond a few days and the patient is awakened at night
- constant numbness and increasing weakness in the legs
- difficulty in controlling the bowels or bladder
- numbness around the genital region
- fever, chills, sweats or other signs of infection

Treatment options

Medication

The doctor will prescribe different medications to control the pain at an early stage. Anti-inflammatory medications are helpful in reducing back pain and the associated inflammation. The doctor may also prescribe pain killers or muscle relaxants to further control pain and muscle spasm. If other medical conditions, such as a stomach problem, are present, please consult the doctor or pharmacist for advice.

Physiotherapy

The doctor may refer the patient to see a physiotherapist.

The physiotherapist will assess the condition and deliver appropriate treatments, such as manual therapy, soft tissue massage and electrotherapy to reduce pain and improve tissue healing. They also advise on postural correction, back care and proper lifting techniques.

Appropriate exercise is also important to improve the muscle function in the later stage of rehabilitation. Pilates is one of the commonly used approaches to improve core muscle control through muscle training, to facilitate a correct posture and movement pattern to prevent re-injury.



Surgical intervention

If the condition does not settle with medication and physiotherapy treatment, a specialist may suggest some diagnostic tests, for example, X-rays, MRI scan and discography. Decompressive and stabilization surgery may also be advised should the response to conservative treatment be unsatisfactory. Most spinal surgeries can be done through minimally invasive techniques. Please discuss with the specialist for the surgical options.

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please call 2849 0760 or email physio@matilda.org.

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information of our medical
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腰背痛

腰背痛是成年人一種常見的痛症，尤其是四十至六十歲人士，幸好大部分患者的痛症可在六星期內消退。



症狀

- 背部周圍感到緊繃、痛楚及僵硬
- 痛楚或向下延伸，令臀部及雙腳感到麻痺、刺痛 (坐骨神經痛)

腰背痛的常見成因

腰背痛分為兩大類別：急性和慢性。腰背痛成因不一，而脊椎的受損部分亦有所不同。

急性腰背痛

常見成因：

創傷、意外或體力勞動姿勢不良

肌肉過勞

提舉重物或突然扭動以致肌肉過度伸展，令背肌負荷過重。



韌帶過勞

突如其來的動作 (如跌倒或不良的提舉姿勢) 可令韌帶過勞，因為肌肉或來不及正確收縮保護脊椎，導致韌帶伸展過度或撕裂。

椎間盤突出

突如其來的重物提舉或扭動或會令啞啞狀的椎間盤擠出，令脊椎神經線受壓而出現的徵狀。



腰背痛及
坐骨神經痛

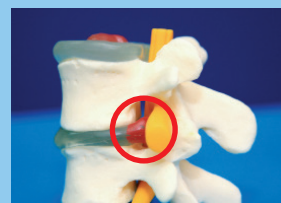
慢性腰背痛

常見成因：

腰椎隨著年紀逐漸老化或長期姿勢欠佳

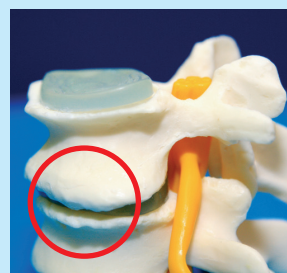
盤源性腰痛 / 椎間盤突出

長期姿勢不良或會令啞啞狀的椎間盤擠出，令脊椎神經線受壓而引致背痛的症狀。



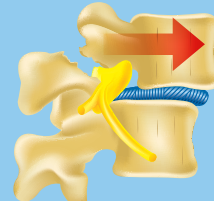
腰椎關節強直

脊椎因年紀漸增或長期姿勢不良退化。椎間盤空間收窄，脊椎關節周圍的軟組織增厚及鈣化，形成骨贅，對脊椎神經施壓，令患者出現背痛症狀。



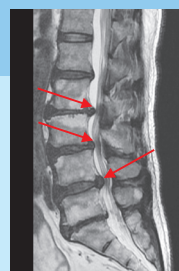
脊椎前移

脊椎骨向鄰近的脊椎骨滑前，令腰椎變形及椎管收窄，其成因可以是由於脊椎退化、姿勢不良或先天缺陷。



椎管狹窄

椎間盤或椎骨退化是導致椎管收窄的常見成因。椎管收窄會令脊髓或神經線受壓，影響四肢活動能力。



其他成因：

肥胖、壓力、骨質疏鬆及癌症

患有腰背痛該怎麼辦？

休息

要治療腰背痛，首先讓脊椎休息，令肌肉減少抽搐，促進復原。避免提舉、扭動的動作及體力勞動。

冰敷或熱敷

冰敷常用於突發性的創傷 (如背部拉傷)；熱敷則可幫助消除肌肉抽搐所引致的腰背不適。定時冰敷或熱敷，每次十五分鐘，有助舒緩痛楚。



警號

大部分的背痛只會持續數天，數星期後便會完全消失。不過，以下症狀或是一些警號，提醒患者需即時正視問題，及早求醫。

- 背痛持續超過數天，病人在晚間痛醒
- 持續感到雙腳麻痺和越來越軟弱無力
- 控制大小便出現困難
- 鄰近生殖部位感到麻痺
- 發燒、發冷、流汗或其他受感染的症狀

治療方法

藥物治療

初期醫生會處方藥物鎮痛。消炎藥有助減輕背痛及相關的發炎症狀。醫生或會使用止痛劑或肌肉緩和劑進一步為患者鎮痛及舒緩肌肉抽搐。如有其他健康問題 (如腸胃不適)，請諮詢醫生或藥劑師的意見。

物理治療

醫生或會轉介患者給物理治療師進行治療。

物理治療師會評估病情及提供合適治療 (如徒手治療、軟組織按摩及電療法)，幫助患者鎮痛和促進肌肉組織復原，亦會幫助糾正姿勢及給予背部護理及正確提舉技巧的意見。

康復後期，合適的運動對改善肌肉效能十分重要。普拉提運動是其中一種常用作改善核心肌群的運動，透過鍛練肌肉、幫助患者改善姿勢和活動模式，以減少再次受傷的機會。



其他療法及手術治療

如藥物和物理治療無法改善病情，專科醫生或會建議患者接受測試，如X光檢查、磁力共振檢查及椎間盤造影掃描等。如傳統療法無效，或會建議患者進行減壓及固定椎間盤的手術。現時大多數的脊椎手術都能利用微創技術進行。請與專科醫生商討不同手術方案。

撰寫：

明德國際醫院物理治療部

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