

Chronic Low Back Pain

Warning

If along with your low back pain you are having leg numbness, are unable to move your legs, are unable to pee or are having bowel incontinence, please make your way to your local Emergency Department or urgently contact your health care provider for additional guidance.

There are multiple causes of back pain. Clarify with your health care provider which class your type of back pain falls under. If it has been diagnosed as “mechanical low back/lumbar pain”, “non specific low back pain” or “low back/lumbar sprain”, the following information applies to you and is intended to assist you in improving your overall quality of life.

What is Mechanical Low Back Pain?

The lumbar spine is made of solid bony blocks joined by disc to give it strength and flexibility. It's reinforced by ligaments and surrounded by large muscles that protect it.

In mechanical low back pain, it's usually not possible to pinpoint which of these is the specific source of pain. Often, mechanical low back pain is assumed to be due to a combination of muscles and ligaments strains along the spine, wear and tear of discs and spine joints. These working parts are simply not moving and working as they should.

This type of back pain will usually not be detected by X-Rays and MRI scans.

The typical presentation of mechanical low back pain is a localized low back pain that worsens with movement and improves with rest.

We consider it chronic when it lasts more than 3 months.

What Should You do?

In addition to the treatment plan discussed with your health care provider, a few additional points need to be brought up to help you get your back moving properly again:

Combining different approaches is the best way to take care of your pain. Pain relief can come from a variety of remedies.

- Consider getting a massage, acupuncture, going to yoga classes and feel free to discuss other remedies with your health care provider.

- For short term mild pain relief, you may take over-the-counter medications such as Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen if you have no health contraindications.(Please confirm with your pharmacist or your health care provider.)
- Learn and use pain coping skills, such as relaxation and stress management to decrease your pain.

Keep moving! Staying active and exercise help. Bed rest is not a treatment and beyond a day or two it can even prolong pain. Instead, keep moving within your physical limits.

- o Modification of your usual activities might be required.
- o Join a physiotherapy program near you.
- o If you do not have coverage for physiotherapy, the suggested exercises below can get you started.

How to Prevent Chronic Back Pain?

For most individuals, acute (less than 3 weeks) mechanical low back pain will resolve within 6 weeks.

- o To prevent it from becoming chronic remain as active as tolerated.
- o When choosing a physical activity, make sure it doesn't worsen the pain once stopped and that the pain doesn't further spread.

Basic Exercises For Chronic Low Back Pain