

# ACUTE LOW BACK PAIN

## What you can do to help yourself get better

### What is acute low back pain?

Acute pain is defined as pain lasting for up to 6 weeks. It's also called short-term pain. Low back pain can last for longer than 6 weeks, but usually goes away after a few days to a few weeks.

For most people, it's not possible to identify which part of the back is causing pain. Usually it isn't caused by serious injury, disease or damage, or associated with lasting damage.

You can take care of most acute low back pain yourself. This is called self-management. Here are some important things you can do to help yourself get better.

### Stay active, keep moving

You can reduce your activities for a few days, but resting any longer is not going to help you recover more quickly. The sooner you start moving again, the faster your back will feel better.

Move about and stretch regularly. Avoid staying in one position, such as sitting at your computer, watching TV or lying down, for more than 20–30 minutes at a time.

### Non-medication treatments

You can use heat packs to reduce pain. Relaxation techniques and deep breathing exercises can help you stay calm and cope with the pain.

Speak to your health professional about whether treatments such as exercise, mobilisation, manipulation, massage and acupuncture might be right for you.

### Symptom-relief medicines

You can use simple non-prescription pain-relief medications to reduce your pain enough to help you stay active. Paracetamol is usually the first choice. Discuss other medications with your health professional.

### MAKE YOUR PLAN

#### Stay active, keep moving

Try: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Avoid: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

#### Non-medication treatments

- Apply heat
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### Symptom-relief medicines

- Paracetamol (eg, Panadol, Dymadon)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# SELF-MANAGEMENT DIARY

Date & time	Things I did to help myself get better (stay active, heat, medicines etc.)	How I felt afterwards (better, worse, same)	My 'helpful' rating (0 = no help, 5 = very helpful)					
27 April, 10.30am	Used a heat pack on my back for 10 minutes.	Better – could sit up without pain.	0	1	2	3	4	5
			0	1	2	3	4	5
			0	1	2	3	4	5
			0	1	2	3	4	5
			0	1	2	3	4	5
			0	1	2	3	4	5
			0	1	2	3	4	5
			0	1	2	3	4	5
			0	1	2	3	4	5
			0	1	2	3	4	5
			0	1	2	3	4	5

EXAMPLE ONLY

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