

# Yoga and Back Pain Prevention

Exercises To Relieve Back Pain – And Those To Avoid

**THE HOT YOGA DOCTOR**

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[www.hotyogadoctor.com](http://www.hotyogadoctor.com)

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## Why assemble a book on yoga and back pain?

Surely the aim of yoga is to prevent maladies such as back pain?

True enough!

The fact is though, many in the western world are afflicted with back pain or back ache at some point in their lives. Our modern world makes many “forward-bending” demands of our bodies – and as you will read in this book, this is one of the key culprits.

Even our necks and heads are not safe from our technology-driven society. Peering over documents, leaning into computer screens and making sense of the massive amounts of information fed to us each and every day place stress on our entire back-neck-and –head system.

So even if you don’t generally experience any back issues right now, I strongly recommend you at least understand the pressures currently affecting all of us in a busy world, if only to make sure you set up a healthy future for your back.

With that I urge you to read this book in depth, feel free to print it out for reference and share it with your family and friends.

When you’ve read it, head on over to [www.hotyogadoctor.com](http://www.hotyogadoctor.com), look for the “Back Pain Report” link and leave your comments – I’d love to hear them!

Namaste

Gabrielle

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## Back Pain: Balance Your Spinal System With Yoga – In Just A Few Minutes Each Day!

I'm doing a ton of work at my computer at the moment (very hush hush top secret – can't share it with you ... yet!), I'm spending hours and hours on it each day in fact.

But I never get back ache or any back pain.

In fact I used to suffer from a fairly severe scoliosis, so you might expect me to complain from some degree of discomfort, just from a general misalignment of the spine.

Fortunately for me, I discovered the benefits of a regular Hot Yoga practice, one of which is the balancing out of the many “forward-bending forces” present in our modern day lives.

I will admit to taking a massage to alleviate some discomfort from spending hours at the computer this week with my workload – but here's the thing: I hadn't done any yoga for a week!

**Lesson No.1: If you do enough yoga, you will not suffer back pain.**  
*(Assuming no injuries)*

My husband is a tall man – and also spends a lot of time on his feet presenting conferences, public speaking – and since he began a regular yoga practice – guess what – years of persistent back “discomfort” disappeared.

I find it hard to understand how people, can get through the day and why we suffer when we simply don't need to!

**Lesson No.2: Suffering is optional. Really.**

Now let's place this in context – there are two main types of muscular issues you could be facing – one is simple back “pain”, “discomfort”, “aches”.

The other is a more acute muscle “spasm”. Whether caused by injury or simply a “pulled muscle”, this must be resolved BEFORE a yoga class – or any physical workout for that matter.

**Lesson No.3: Recognize when you need help. And recognize that not all “professional” help is sufficiently qualified.**

Not all physicians understand back pain and its causes; not all massage therapists and body workers are created equal; professional qualifications vary to the extreme from country to country – and your yoga teacher may have the best of intentions, but no anatomical training.

There are some excellent contributions in this book about what to expect from a specialist and what questions to ask – so I’ll leave it to them ... but let’s now assume the “acute muscle spasms” are now under control – but there is still that persistent back pain and/or weakness.

At some point you are going to have to start using your body!

And this means REVERSING the effects of our modern world.

All those forward bends – over the work desk, hunched over a computer; driving; sitting; cycling; cleaning the house; picking up after kids – the list goes on and on and nowhere a backward bend.

**Lesson No.4: Your spine is designed to bend in all directions.**

The backbend *is* the antidote to the daily rigors of our modern physical world.

Backbends BALANCE your spine and BALANCE and STRENGTHEN muscle movements. This in turn helps your spine withstand intense positions held for a long time – such as computer work.

Here’s how to get a daily dose of the antidote – **without even going near a yoga class:**

***If you know the Bikram Yoga Series -***

5 Minutes in the morning practice the following:

- Pranayama Breathing
- Ardha Chandrasana (including the back bend)
- Pada Hastasana

***Use the “20 Minute Series” -***

This is a short sequence of poses from the series that takes around 20 minutes – one that I normally recommend to people traveling and unable to go to a studio. It also happens to be perfect for keeping your back strong under stress.

But not everyone knows the Bikram Series, so if that is you . . .

***Take a few minutes to practice Cobra Pose (Bhujangasana) -***

Take Cobra pose as often as you like and especially to relieve lower back pain.

- Lay belly down on the floor, legs together
- Tense your legs and buttocks
- On an inhale, lift the front half of your body off the floor in a “backbend” and look up – where your eyes go, the body follows.
- Hold for 3-4 deep breaths and slowly release.
- Rest a while with your head turned to one side and your arms to your side, legs relaxed, before getting up.

NOTE: Bikram students tend to do this pose without assistance from the hands pushing on the floor. This is likely to be more effective at strengthening the back muscles. But even with the hands assisting, you’ll still get great relief from back discomfort.

**Why are backbends the key?**

Because, just as your spine is designed to bend in all directions, your muscles are designed to support that movement. So the muscles in the front side of your body that *contract* for a forward bend must *extend* for a backward bend.

Conversely, the muscles in your back that *extend* to help forward bends must *contract* for a back bend.

If all or any of these muscles are only exercising one portion of their functionality then that exposes a weakness – which eventually presents itself as an inability to hold certain positions (such as desk or computer work) for hours on end – and creates ... back pain.

Now I must go – I’ve got some refreshing back bends to do before I get back to my “secret business” ...

Namaste

Gabrielle

*You can find out more about how yoga can help you – and also see the entire series of Bikram Yoga Poses, picture-by-picture – at:*

[www.quickfityoga.com](http://www.quickfityoga.com)

*Knowing More About Back Pain*

### **Gabrielle's notes for this Chapter:**

Following are 5 articles about what back pain is and some of its causes. Every one of these authors agrees that exercise is key to rehabilitating the back. And moreover that yoga is an excellent regime to undertake.

Back pain is not just a result of injury, but also the lack of use or movement in muscles that are designed to support the body in all its range of activities. 'Use or lose it' seems to be the common belief.

A word of exception: one of the authors mentions Bikram Yoga or Hot Yoga as a flowing style of yoga not suited to treating back pain. As a Bikram Certified Teacher I have to disagree with this one single comment. While Ashtanga, Power and Viniyoga are flowing styles, Bikram yoga contains no jump through movements. I would only counsel students with back pain to make their own assessment as to whether they should do their sit-ups as part of their series while they are convalescing. Bikram yoga is a series of static poses.

My belief is that no one needs to live with persistent background pain. A little maintenance goes a long way to keep stiffness and discomfort away. Yoga and especially Bikram Yoga in my years of experience can stop or limit or minimize medication use.

A couple of the authors recommend thorough investigations before attempting alternative style treatments. While investigations are necessary your choice for invasive investigation will definitely depend on the duration of your pain, the severity (whether acute or chronic) and your general level of wellbeing.

Someone generally healthy with a couple of days of localized or generalized discomfort may be a better candidate for yoga exercise straight off the bat than someone with chronic systemic disease who has a longstanding history of dysfunction. Use your judgment but DO SOMETHING. For all the different types of imbalances (physical, emotional and general health disorders) there is no fixed formula. Every BODY is different.

This means looking at the person as a whole not just someone with back pain and solely treating the back pain.

Guidelines for treating low back pain are of course useful. Any guideline can never be applicable to 100% of all patients. See above. At times of discomfort and minor pain – move, receive a massage or body work. Acute pain – taking medication is a short term option while you manage pain and seek other alternatives.

If something lasts more than 2 days then I encourage you to act, otherwise you are waiting too long!

## Yoga As An Effective Treatment For Back Pain

By [Jez Heath](#)

About 90% of us will suffer from some form of lower back pain during our adult lives. When this happens many of us as back pain sufferers will be given treatment advice that doesn't really treat the underlying causes of our back pain, focusing instead on simply trying to manage the symptoms with painkillers and other drugs.

But clinical studies have found that most forms of low back pain respond well to conservative (non-surgical) treatments. These simple treatments can really address the causes of the pain and provide lasting relief.

### **Exercise is nature's cure**

As counter-intuitive as it may seem at first, one of the most effective treatments for lower back pain is exercise - regardless of the underlying cause of the back pain. Exercise is crucial to build and maintain a healthy cardiovascular system as well as being essential for the development of muscle strength. This has particular importance in relation to lower back pain because a leading cause of back pain is weak or unbalanced development of muscles in the back, abdomen or legs. Clearly avoiding exercise when we suffer from back pain is only going to further weaken our muscles and make us more susceptible to back pain.

Exercise treatment for lower back pain focuses on the extensor and rotator/oblique muscles in the back to build strength and support for the spine. At the same time we need to build abdominal muscle strength to build our flexion strength in balance and proportion to our extension strength. Finally back pain exercises should help us to build suppleness in our hamstrings to aid the unrestricted motion of our hips and pelvis since restricted movement of the pelvis increases the strain on the lower back.

### **Yoga is the natural cure for back pain**

Because of the gentle nature of yoga and its effectiveness in building muscle strength and flexibility, a regular yoga practice is ideal for the prevention and treatment of lower back pain. Those of us that are not particularly strong or supple are likely to benefit the most from yoga as a cure for lower back pain.

Specifically tailored routines of yoga postures, can be effective in treating axial and referred back pain, slipped and damaged spinal disks as well as radicular back pain including sciatica and piriformis. Although all of these types of back pain respond well to gentle extension of the back, through back bends, the first step in using yoga exercise as a cure for back pain is understanding the type of back pain from which we are suffering. Different types of back pain respond to different yoga poses so only by understanding the cause of our back pain can we apply the correct cure. But more importantly, we need to know which exercises to avoid so we can prevent further injury, for example, if we are suffering from a slipped disk then we should avoid flexion of the back (forward bends).

### **Getting started with yoga to cure back pain**

Of utmost importance when using yoga to treat back pain is finding suitable instruction. First you need to find a school that teaches the right kind of yoga. Many yoga schools in the west teach a dynamic or flowing form of yoga known as Vinyasa. The constant movement of this type of yoga means that you enter and exit poses very quickly which is not really suitable for the lower back pain sufferer. To avoid further injury, yoga poses should be entered and exited slowly allowing for gentle movement so we can check our correct alignment and notice pain that may be an indicator of further injuries to soft tissues in the back. Ashtanga, Power yoga, Viniyoga and Bikram yoga are all types of flowing Vinyasa yoga and may not be suitable for the effective treatment of back pain.

Once we have found a yoga center that teaches the right style of yoga we need to check out the teacher. We need to find a teacher that is experienced in practicing and teaching yoga, because their knowledge of designing a yoga routine and describing each pose is an essential part of our yoga experience. Ideally we should look for a teacher who is experienced in treating back pain so they can tailor the routines to our specific condition, abilities and needs.

To find out more about the causes of lower back pain and how yoga can help relieve lower back pain visit <http://www.DispelBackPain.com> With a degree in Ayurveda traditional Indian medicine and a master degree in yoga therapy, Varun Veer provides a wealth of information on a quick and natural end to back pain.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Jez Heath is helping real people [learn yoga online](#) so they can make the commitment necessary to improve their yoga and their health - mind, body and soul. Learn how [yoga streaming video](#) can help you transform your life

Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Jez\\_Heath](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Jez_Heath)

## Four Back Pain Myths

By [Don Moor](#)

What are the causes of back pain? There are ideas and stories that are circulated about back pain and its causes. Sorting out the truth from the myths of back pain can be very helpful to the sufferer.

Here are four myths associated with back pain.

1. You may have heard that lifting heavy things will give you back pain. However, learning to lift objects the right way, whether heavy or not, can minimize the strain to your back. Bending your knees to spread the weight of the object and using your legs and hips more will decrease reliance on your back. Also using good judgment when moving heavy objects can help avoid unnecessary strain on your back and may include asking for help from others or utilizing other tools.
2. Others may tell you that if your back hurts you should go to bed and stay there until it feels better. They may tell you to use a heating pad or an icepack. However, keeping your back immobile while heating or cooling the tissues may actually hinder healing. The back needs some activity to heal right. The gentle stretching of muscles and walking are a good place to start to maintain your mobility and flexibility.
3. Most back pain starts with an injury. Although an injury certainly can be responsible for a person's back pain, it is more likely that back pain comes with inactivity and not getting enough physical exercise. Sitting at a desk all day without proper ergonomics can contribute to back pain. Learn some simple exercises you can do throughout the day at your job that will keep your back flexible and strong.
4. Many people believe that back pain will lead to disability and/or surgery. However for many people, back pain is transient and with proper care will go away within a few weeks. Even those with more chronic back pain can manage it effectively with things like chiropractic care, acupuncture, yoga and massage.

Surgery should be a last resort as research shows that surgery is no more effective than alternative forms of care.

It is not a myth that at some time in their lives many people will suffer from back pain. A sensible exercise program, heightened awareness of back care, and common sense should lead to a healthier back.

*For more information and resources on Back Pain, visit [www.About-Your-Back-Pain.com](http://www.About-Your-Back-Pain.com). Don Moor is a successful Webmaster and his website specializes in relaying targeted information about Back Pain and helps you locate [<http://www.about-your-back-pain.com/resources.html>]associated products and services to alleviate back problems.*

*Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Don Moor](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Don_Moor)*

## Understanding Lower Back Pain

By [Bobby Prajitno](#)

In this modern world, it is very common people will have some encounter with low back pain / backache at some point in life. Lower back pain is normally felt in the lumbar and sacral region and may impact other nearby areas in your lower back. Backache can be caused by various reasons, from simple ones like muscular strain, diseases in the back, gynaecological problems or due to problems in other parts of the body.

For backache due to muscle strain, it is normally caused by lactic acid and pyruvic acid build up which are byproducts for every muscle contraction. When these acidic byproducts accumulate in muscles, they may cause irritation that can eventually result to pain.

Diseases in your back may contribute also to your lower back pain. This can be caused by:

1. Inflammatory conditions, such as bacterial bone infection, arthritis or inflammation of the muscles,
2. Functional backache due to imbalance during pregnancy, potbelly or a short leg on one side,
3. Tumor in the spine,
4. Injuries such as compression fracture of the vertebral column or rupture of inter-vertebral discs,
5. Degenerative diseases in the back: osteoarthritis or osteoporosis in old people

Backache due to gynaecological problems can form after childbirth or the presence of pelvic inflammatory diseases. Many young parents of newborn child complain of low back pain. Problems in other parts of the body may also contribute to lower back pain: renal stones, ureteric stone, pancreatitis or even cancer of prostate.

In order to initiate treatment to a case of backache, thorough investigation of the real cause of the pain must be performed first. This may include complete blood count, urine examination, ultrasonography / X-ray / MRI or CT scan of the abdomen and pelvis. Once the main cause of the low back pain is determined then appropriate remedy can be administered.

Treatment of back ache may involve quick - symptomatic treatment by massage or rubbing pain relief oil to the area, and up to removing the cause for backache and prevention of recurrence via surgery, practicing of proper postures, exercises, yoga, or homoeopathy.

The principle of homoeopathy is that it treats the patient as a whole rather than only locally treating the unwell parts. The physical, mental, emotional, social spheres of a person are considered for a permanent cure. When someone is healthy, there is some kind of vital energy that maintains the equilibrium of mind, body and soul. And when there is a derangement of this vital energy then that person will fall sick.

*For more information on how you can do your own [holistic back care](#) or if you need more information on natural medicine such as [natural remedy for acid reflux](#), visit [Holistic And Integrated Medicine](#) site*

*Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Bobby\\_Prajitno](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Bobby_Prajitno)*

## Back Pain - Did You Know About The Triangle?

By [Graeme Teague](#)

Are you one of the many that have back pain? Are you tired and stressed because your back pain now rules your life? Are you confused as to why you have tried so many things yet your back pain remains?

Don't worry you are in good company. Over 80% of adults suffer from back pain at some stage. Almost 90% of these people will suffer from recurring bouts of back pain. Eventually these same people will have their older years in chronic back pain misery.

It sounds frightening doesn't it? The most frightening thing is this...

**Back pain is easily solved if you understand the Back Pain Triangle.**

Now you probably have never heard of this triangle. It is not a product, a system or package. The Back Pain Triangle is the understanding behind why you continually suffer from back pain.

Back pain arises from 3 separate areas. If you do not correct all 3, then back pain will return. So what are these 3 areas?

### **Back Pain Triangle - side 1**

The first side to the triangle is the easiest to understand and the area that most concentrate on. This is why so much back pain remains today.

The first side is the structural causes of back pain - tight muscles, weak muscles and joint imbalance.

If you correct all of these then the structural causes of back pain will ease. However, these are re-created if the other two sides of the triangle are not in balance. Research has shown that the trauma caused by lifting an object, or doing a normal daily activity (the most common causes of back pain), is not sufficient to create back pain.

This means the physical trauma that you thought caused your back pain ... didn't! It came from a buildup of tension, from physical causes and from the other two sides to the back pain triangle.

### **Back Pain Triangle - side 2**

The second side is less understood, but as much a cause of back pain. Your general health affects your back. If you are tired, have bowel complaints (minor or major), hormonal imbalances, immune problems or are just generally not 100% healthy, then back pain is more likely.

For example, your lower back is affected by your bowel. If you suffer from constipation, diarrhea, gas and wind, bloating ... then there is extra pressure on your lower back. This can set your lower back in a state of tension where when you lift, your back does not have the strength it needs.

Suddenly you have back pain from lifting an object you have lifted a hundred times before.

If you are tired, your muscles tire. Notice how when you have a flu/cold your muscles feel sore also. All of these set you up so back pain is more likely.

Hence your general health is just as important as your structural health.

### **Back pain Triangle - side 3**

The final side is probably the most important. The third side is your emotional health.

This does not mean depression or anxiety, although these are important also.

But your general stress levels affect your back. If you are stressed, anxious, worried or generally not at ease, then muscles tighten. There is a saying that "stress rides on your shoulders".

This means when your mind is overactive, you are not coping too well, and then your muscles in your upper back tighten. Notice how if you get someone to squeeze your shoulder muscles after a busy day how they feel like rocks and are very tender.

Stress affects not just your shoulder muscles, but the entire muscular system. You notice your shoulders, because being hunched over a desk it is these that you are working the most. Not all muscles are tighter when you are stressed.

So to remove back pain once and for all, you need to address the physical, general and emotional causes to your back pain. Don't worry, the other two sides are actually easier to eliminate than the physical side, and take less time and effort.

*Are you one of the over 80% of adults suffering from back pain? Then you need simple, valuable and expert advice - visit [The Back Pain Advisor](#)*

*If you have back pain, neck pain or sciatica ... do you want to get rid of it once and for all ... then click here [The X-Pain Method](#)*

*Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Graeme Teague](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Graeme_Teague)*

## 7 Guidelines for Treating Low Back Pain - Does Your Doctor Know Them?

By [Barry K Hughes](#)

The American College of Physicians recently released its guidelines for diagnosing and treating lower back pain. These guidelines are the result of a long and intensive review of research on lower back pain. I have translated them from "doctorese" for your benefit.

1. Treating professionals should take a good history and do a thorough physical exam. The purpose of that exam is to identify which of three categories of back pain you have. The three groups are back pain with no specific cause, back pain with radiculopathy or spinal stenosis, or back pain with some other specific cause.
2. If you are in the first (non-specific) group, your doctor should not order routine imaging tests like x-rays or MRI's.
3. If your back pain is accompanied by worsening neurological deficits or evidence of some serious underlying medical condition, then the doctor should order diagnostic and imaging tests.
4. If you have lower back pain and radiculopathy, then MRI's or CT scans should be ordered only if you are a candidate for and epidural injection or surgery.
5. Your doctor should give you evidence-based information on low back pain. This information should include the expected course of their pain, advice to remain active, and a review of possible self-care alternatives.
6. Your doctor should consider medications that have been shown to be effective, and should use them along with self-care options. Medication should be accompanied by an assessment of your pain levels, and you should be advised of all the pros and cons of the medications. Recommended started medications for most people are an NSAID or acetaminophen.

7. If improvement is not seen with this program, your doctor should consider recommending other pain management alternatives. For chronic back pain, this include relaxation, acupuncture, yoga, massage therapy, exercise, and spinal manipulation.

It's to your advantage to be an informed patient and know these guidelines. They tell you what information your doctor should be getting from you, and what issues should be addressed directly with you as you and your doctor develop your treatment plan.

These guidelines are a summary of those approved by the American Pain Society. They were released in October 2007, and have been published a number of places, including the Annals of Internal Medicine. Consider printing a copy of this article and keeping it for reference, and to discuss with your doctor if you have any questions.

*Barry Hughes, Ph.D. is a psychologist and publisher of [Chronic Pain Alternatives](#), which provides Resources and Information for People with Chronic Pain. He has built this site using [Site Build It!](#), the easiest way to translate your passion onto the Web.*

*Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Barry\\_K\\_Hughes](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Barry_K_Hughes)*

*Exercises To Prevent And Relieve Back Pain*

### **Gabrielle's notes for this Chapter:**

In the first article of this group Nancy Wile talks about how yoga can be effective in managing and treating back pain and how it is actually better than regular exercise. Her findings reflect my experience, both personal and in observation of many thousands of students. Students who come to a Hot Yoga class are obviously committed to fixing whatever ails them. Their fast and often immediate results are so wonderful that they are eager to continue their practice, and realize that their yoga is missing when they start to feel backaches and discomfort. Bikram Yoga is definitely a comprehensive program for all sorts of physical, mental and emotional sources of imbalance.

Jennifer Jordan continues on the same vein. She also talks about the power of the breath which is such a fundamental part of yoga. Positive thinking gets a mention. I would add to that your powers of observation are equally important. Yoga and meditation in general is about what you notice. When you practice this skill you begin to become attuned with your responses and reactions to different stimuli. You definitely become more attentive to the changes in your own body and use your body's own intelligence more to create powerful changes in your body, heart and mind.

Shelley Hitz brings us some concrete exercises to try when you have not the resources or time to get to class, or just when you need a pick-me-up or fast back/neck relief. The exercises are useful and easy. I would add to the twist exercise that the way to know that you are not going too far is to ensure that your hips both stay planted on the ground.

Paul Osborne takes a holistic view of the pain experienced by so many on a long term basis. Once again it is gentle exercise and relaxation that are the key. If you don't know already, especially if you tend to be more highly strung than the average person, that relaxation is a learned skill. You have to practice it to instill the benefits and to be able to bring on that state when you need it. Without practice you may find it difficult to do when you need it most. That is the case with most things, can you do it, and can you do it when it will be of greatest use to you! And being able to relax physically and mentally are strongly related.

This article is followed by a second and third article by Paul. They give you some exercises to work on and some sound advice.

Michael Russell and John Groth separately give you some guidelines to work out when yoga or his simple exercises may be attempted or when you need to seek extra help in diagnosing and treating your problem. These are simple exercises you could do just about anywhere especially at your desk or terminal.

Remember don't just use these exercises to treat pain and discomfort. Use them as a means to prevent pain and general body and mind wellbeing.

Ricky Lim gives some more easy to understand exercises for different grades of back pain. Ricky believes in natural back pain relief which he explores further by examining different methodologies all in wide use. Acupuncture and Tai Chi find their roots in ancient Chinese medicine and are finding increasing popularity in the western world because they are a great addition to the modern armamentarium.

I always like to opt for the less invasive forms of treatment first.

## Experiencing Back Pain? Yoga Can Help

By [Nancy Wile](#)

According to a recent study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, yoga may be more effective for the treatment of low back pain than traditional exercise. The study, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, followed participants who suffered from chronic but not serious back pain. Participants either took yoga classes, attended therapeutic exercise classes, or practiced therapeutic back exercises from a book. At the end of 26 weeks, those who tried the yoga classes experienced the most improvement in back function and were most likely to have reduced their pain medication, and these benefits persisted for at least several months.

### Why is Yoga an Effective Way to Treat Back Pain?

There are a number of reasons that yoga is an effective way to relieve back pain and improve the overall health of your back.

1. Yoga helps increase strength in very specific muscle groups and works to strengthen all major muscle groups that support the spine.
2. The stretching postures in yoga increase blood flow to the tissues that support the spine, improving the health of the intervertebral discs and muscles along the spine.
3. Yoga increases flexibility in your shoulders and hips, which decreases demands on your back, and yoga increases flexibility of the muscles in your back and along your spine, allowing your spine to rotate properly.
4. Yoga's focus on breathing and connecting breath with movement improves body awareness, making you more conscious of movements that may contribute to back pain.
5. The "spine lengthening" poses in yoga promote good posture and proper alignment of the vertebrae. When the spine lengthens, it naturally moves towards correct alignment. Having proper posture ensures that you are not placing undue stress upon your back.

## Healing Your Back with Yoga

Maintaining an injury-resistant and resilient back with good posture depends on three interrelated components of muscle health: flexibility, strength and endurance. All of these three factors are involved in every move we make. Flexibility forms the foundation for strength and endurance, and a lack of flexibility carries an increased risk of injury during training for strength and endurance.

The arms, legs, chest all attach to the spine via the shoulder girdle, pelvis and ribs. The weight of the head is perched on the end of the spine. Therefore, the spine affects and is affected by every movement the body makes. For example, if your head is not properly balanced, the natural curve of the neck becomes distorted. If the arms and legs don't have full range of motion, the spine must compensate by extra twisting and bending. Many people with back or neck pain suffer from imbalances of the flexors, extensors and rotators of the spine, arms and legs. An intelligent yoga program can bring these muscle groups back into balance.

However, not all yoga programs will help with back pain. If you try a very vigorous yoga practice while having back pain and fail to listen to the signals from your body, back pain could actually get worse. It's important to take it slow, listen to signals from your body and practice yoga exercises that are appropriate for helping back pain.

To try simple yoga exercises for your low back, visit: [www.yogaforbackhealth.com](http://www.yogaforbackhealth.com). You find lots of free yoga exercises for your low back that are explained and illustrated, as well as free yoga video downloads of simple exercises you can do now to alleviate back pain.

### Reference:

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Nancy Wile, Ed.D. is the founder of Yoga To Go – a yoga organization that provides simple and effective yoga programs for busy people around the world. To learn more about healing your back with yoga, visit: <http://www.yogaforbackhealth.com>.

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## Yoga and Back Pain

By [Jennifer Jordan](#)

Back pain is a part of many people's lives. From long hours of sitting in a chair staring at a computer to the moments spent lifting up a heavy box to the hours spent toting a three-year old around on a hip, pain often manifests in one of the workhorses of our body: the back. While this sort of pain may simply seem like a load to bear, something with which we all must deal, there are ways of lessening it, getting the proverbial monkey off our back completely.

Many people plagued by back pain have recently turned to yoga, using it as a way to condition their body by the way they think and feel about its relation to their mind and spirit. Yoga moves every joint in your body. You begin to realize where you hold tension in your body and this allows you to let it go. You can actually make changes and live your life in a tension free relaxed manner. Along these lines, pain is sometimes informative. It's your body's way of saying that it's time to change your habits. Yoga encourages us to explore pain, using it as a way to understand our body and habits.

Restorative yoga helps you become aware of and relax chronic tension held in the muscles, for example, muscles along the spine and in the neck and shoulders. Decreased chronic tension can begin to relieve back pain that manifests. A healthy resilient spine distributes weight throughout the whole body. With correct posture, you can help prevent muscular tension in the back and future structural problems, as well as give your internal organs room to function normally.

Conditioning the entire body - especially the legs, back and stomach muscles helps support the back and spine. These muscles bear a lot of the body's physical load and they are highly conducive to proper posture and correct alignment. Thus, when these muscles are strong and resilient, the support comes from the inside out. A well conditioned body allows it to self-regulate and the pain that once plagued you begins to subside.

In addition to relaxing and strengthening muscles, yoga also elongates them through flexibility. For people with back problems, particularly lower back problems, flexibility is highly important. Stretching and improving the flexibility of a seemingly unrelated muscle, such as the hamstring, decreases the amount of stress placed on the back, ultimately decreasing tension and pain.

But, flexibility doesn't stop there, flexing its muscles in other aspects. In addition to relieving the stress and tension placed on a person's back, flexibility also increases circulation, sending nutrients into back muscles and filtering toxins out of them. This nourishes back muscles and muscle tissue, leaving them healthier and more properly armed for pain prevention.

Proper breathing, one of the backbones of yoga, is also essential to quieting back pain. Many times people erroneously perform yoga poses with their breath held, creating stress on their body. This tendency, however, must be broken in order for proper breathing to promote the body's natural healing potential. Once people have learned to take deep, rhythmic, natural breaths, their body becomes relaxed, freeing them of pain-causing restrictions and facilitating proper circulation. Proper breathing also oxygenates the body, which creates harmony and calm, producing a better balanced being.

Making a commitment to the techniques taught in yoga can help commit our backs to a less painful existence. The practice of yoga is intended to improve a person's well being not merely for one 75 minute session at a time, but for a lifetime. When a person begins applying the knowledge they learn in yoga class - correct posture and relaxed breathing to all their waking hours - proper body alignment begins to manifest. This, while improving general health, also protects the curvature of the spine, an element that is essential to the decrease in, and prevention of, back pain.

While the ways yoga physically helps a person's back can be researched, checking out medical journals and highlighting important phrases, only those who practice yoga can fully grasp the way it mentally benefits back pain. One benefit is through the art of self-awareness. Self-awareness helps us to better understand our body's capabilities, and its limitations. By knowing these, we are far less likely to strain our body in such a way that causes back pain. This is because self-awareness leads to empowerment, empowering us to be proactive in our own pain prevention.

Another way yoga mentally benefits back pain is through the concept of perception. Perception is the way we look at things; it conceptualizes the old “glass half empty or half full” adage. We all recall scraping our knees as children and thinking that it didn’t hurt until we saw our own blood flowing through an open wound. At the sight of this, our perception of the injury worsened and the pain skyrocketed. The perception, alone, fueled the pain. Similarly, when we perceive our back pain with negative thoughts – thoughts of hopelessness and despondency - the pain will undoubtedly worsen.

Yoga, however, is a vehicle of positive thinking. By teaching people to embrace thoughts of gratitude, hope, and encouragement, yoga helps us to alter our perception of things, spinning our perception of pain into a more positive light - a gift actually. This is, ultimately, one of the greatest ways to get pain off our backs for good.

*TWISTED is a medical yoga studio at the Center for Osteopathic Medicine in Boulder, Colorado. Twisted integrates osteopathic medicine, hatha yoga and mindfulness practices to teach optimal balance between physical, mental, and emotional health. It aims to educate and help people to live a healthy life from the inside out. Rehabilitation programs offer a comprehensive treatment regime for the whole being, empowering each person one breath at a time to stimulate the body’s natural healing potential.*

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## Are You Willing To Follow Eight Yoga Exercises For the Lower Back?

By [Shelley Hitz](#)

### Exercises for back relief

Many people believe that rest is best for a painful back, but actually, what your back really needs when it's hurt is exercise. Regular exercise relieves back pain by strengthening and stretching the muscles that support the spine and helps to prevent future injury. This is a use it or lose it situation: the more you rest, the weaker your back gets, even if it is hurt. Studies have actually shown that you can heal your back pain faster and get back to your regular activities with just two days of rest. This article will focus on Yoga Exercises. Remember to contact your doctor before beginning any exercise program.

### Yoga exercises for your back

A good, regular yoga practice will go far in relieving the stress and tension that sometimes cause mild back pain, and in fact, studies have shown that yoga is the number one most effective exercise for relieving back pain. However, not all yoga poses relieve back pain, and some can in fact aggravate existing pain, so it is important to know which poses will be most helpful in relieving back pain. It is best to do these exercises under the supervision of a certified yoga instructor, and if you encounter any problems with these poses, you should consult an expert. Even just one or two sessions with a yoga instructor can help, as an instructor will help you with your form and posture during poses. Here are some of the best yoga poses for relieving back pain. Each pose should be held from five to ten seconds, depending upon your level of comfort, and should be done on a mat or other soft, supportive surface.

**CORPSE:** Lie flat on your back in a relaxed position, arms resting at your sides, palms down, and legs lying naturally, with knees turned out slightly. If it hurts your back to have your knees turned outward, do this pose with knees bent, feet flat on the floor. Breathe in and out for a few seconds while allowing any tension to leave the body.

**CAT STRETCH:** Start out on your hands and knees with a flat back. Your hands should be directly under your shoulders with fingers spread. Knees should be directly under the hips. Head is held loosely so that you are looking at the floor between your hands. Inhale, and as you exhale, arch your back toward the ceiling, tuck your chin in to your chest so that you are looking at your navel, and tuck your tailbone underneath. Hold, then release back into your original position.

**WIND-RELEASING POSE:** Lie flat on your back as in Corpse pose. As you inhale, bend your knee, place your hands right below the knee, and draw your leg towards your chest. Your left leg should remain flat on the floor. Exhale and bring your forehead up to touch your knee. Inhale, and then as you exhale, return to your original position. Repeat with the other leg.

**SAGE TWIST:** Warning for this pose—it involves twisting your back, so you should take particular care not to twist too far or you risk aggravating any existing back pain. This should be a gentle stretch; twist just as far as is comfortable. Sit on the floor with both legs out in front of you. Bend your right knee, lift your right leg over your left, and place your right foot on the floor next to your left knee. Sitting with spine straight, place your left elbow on the right side of your right knee. Bend your left arm so that your left fingertips are touching your right hip, while at the same time, twisting to look over your right shoulder. This is where you need to be careful not to twist too far. Hold for a few seconds, release, and repeat on the opposite side.

**PALM TREE:** Stand with feet facing forward, arms at your sides, weight distributed evenly on both feet. Raise both arms over your head, interlock your fingers, and turn your hands so that your palms are facing upward. Next, place your palms on your head and turn your head so that you are looking slightly upward. Stretch your arms upwards, and at the same time, come up onto your toes if you can do so without pain. Stretch your entire body upward and hold, if you can. Some people have difficulty balancing during this pose, so just do the stretching part if you need to.

**FISH POSE:** Lie on your back with knees bent and arms at your side. Arch your back as far as you comfortably can and raise it off the ground by pushing the floor with your elbows. If you can, tilt your head backwards and rest the crown of your head on the floor. Breathe deeply from the diaphragm and hold pose for one minute if you can.

**LOCUST:** Lie face down with arms at the side, palms down, and elbows slightly bent with fingers pointing towards the feet. Raise your legs and thighs as high off the ground as possible without causing your back any pain. Hold for one second and repeat up to twelve times. This can be a vigorous exercise so you must take care to strain already injured muscles.

**BENDING FORWARD POSTURE:** Stand up straight with feet together and arms hanging loosely along your sides. Breathe in deeply and raise your arms straight above your head. While breathing out, bend forward and touch your toes if you can. If you can't reach your toes, grab hold of your ankles or calves. To complete the pose, you should touch your head to your knees, but this may be too difficult for many who suffer from lower back pain. Your movements during this pose should be smooth, not jerky.

*Written by Shelley Hitz, Licensed Physical Therapist and Certified NASM Personal Trainer. Sign up for her free Exercise Advice journal at <http://www.abs-exercise-advice.com/journal.html> or read more about yoga poses at her website <http://www.abs-exercise-advice.com/free-yoga-exercises-online.html> . Get your free unbelievable abs ball workout [here!](#)*

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## Lower Back Pain Exercise: A Healthy Back Means an Active Life

By [Paul D Osborne](#)

Lower back pain exercise is the solution for chronic lower back pain, a common ailment that affects a large number of Americans. It is a pain that just does not go away and many a times becomes an integral part of the body and mind leading to a very painful coexistence. In this case managing this chronic pain assumes primary importance and the first thing you must do is consult your doctor and taking the prescribed medication.

But the most important thing you can do is exercise regularly to assuage some of the chronic pain. You can engage in specific types of lower back pain exercise to alleviate your sufferings and these are crucial as it helps you become flexible and toned and thus control pain. You must be in a good physical condition so as to help you other physical problems that can be the result of chronic lower back pain. It is also necessary to relax your body and Yoga is a great relaxation technique that you can imbibe in your daily routine. Other techniques include visualization, acupuncture, acupressure, and meditation among others.

These relaxation techniques are the first step towards lower back pain exercise and make you breathe correctly and concentrate on the health of your body. These pave the way for the low back pain exercises the foremost among which is the lower back extension exercise. This is a simple exercise that requires no equipment and can be done anywhere. This exercise performs two functions: strengthening lower back and elimination lower back pain.

The exercise makes you sit on a carpet or a mat, with your stomach to the floor keeping your hands and arms flat at your sides and legs extended akin to a standing position. You must then raise your torso slowly as far as you can go, barely to the point wherein you are receiving maximum benefit and are comfortable. You must remember to tighten your buttock while lifting yourself from the ground all the while concentrating on working the lower back. The final step is to lower yourself back on the floor; please do not forget to breathe during this time. This lower back pain exercise must be performed 2-3 times a week, 2 sets with 12-24 repetitions.

Like all exercises this lower back pain exercise also has its variations and can be done on vertical benches or by holding onto extra free weights. But, this exercise is effective whichever way you do it, but you must always take care not to put undue strain on your back.

*Paul Osborne is the executive editor of <http://backpain-resources-online.com> & <http://lowerbackpainrelief.org> Both sites offer a host of information, tips and advice for lower back pain relief.*

*Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Paul D Osborne](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Paul_D_Osborne)*

## Back Pain Exercise: Easy Ways To Keep Your Back Fit

By [Paul D Osborne](#)

Back pain exercise are a must if you want to have a strong midline support, which reduces the stress being place on the lower back and pelvis. The exercise that are mentioned below are stabilization exercises, but if you are suffering from chronic back pain then you must first see a therapist before undertaking this training. Remember, these are strengthening exercises and not stretching exercises so you need to give this regimen a break a few days in a week to the body some rest and build strong muscles. Every individual has specific needs and thus it is necessary to go to a licensed physical therapist who will help you design a personalized exercise routine.

The first back pain exercise is the Transversus Abdominus muscles strengthening exercise which involves a person lying on his/her back with knees bent, with the knees and feet being shoulder length apart. The belly button is then drawn towards the spine all the while maintaining a neutral spine. You now need to exhale and reach towards the ceiling like performing a trapeze act. You then raise your head and shoulders off the floor to a point where the shoulder blades are just touching the floor. You must hold this postion for 1-2 seconds and repeat the whole performance till you are fatigued. You should perform this routing 4-5 days per week one time a day.

Another back pain exercise is the Gluteus Maximus muscle strengthening exercise commonly known as the buttock exercise. In this case, you must lie on the stomach on a table or a bench with the hips and legs protruding off their ends. You then must tighten your buttocks and slowly extend the leg up towards the ceiling all the while maintaining a neutral spine. This position must be held for 5 seconds and 4-10 repetitions per side are a must. The routine should be 4-5 days a week, one time per day.

### Back Pain Exercise for Back Pain Relief

The hip abductor exercise or the Gluteus Medius muscle strengthening routine is a back pain exercise involving raising the leg laterally at the hip supporting the pelvis when standing on the single leg.

If this does not work then another technique is to lie on one side with the back against the wall and drawing the belly button in all the while maintaining a neutral spine. The upper leg is then raised with the toes slightly pointing towards the ceiling and the heel maintaining contact with the wall, albeit slowly with a 2 second hold at the top. You should perform 10 repetitions per side, 4-5 days per week, 1 time per day.

You must take care that all these back pain exercise must be preceded by warm ups and it is always advisable to consult your physician or a medical professional before embarking on any exercise routine.

*Paul Osborne is the executive editor of <http://backpain-resources-online.com> & <http://lowerbackpainrelief.org> Both sites offer a host of information, tips and advice for lower back pain relief.*

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## Lower Back Pain Exercise

By [Paul D Osborne](#)

Lower back pain exercise is very essential to relieve the lower back pain. Lower back pain can result from many conditions and causes. Sometime the cause is obvious, when a person has had a fall or has lifted a heavy load. Often the lower back pain comes on gradually and the cause is not easy to find. Regular lower back pain exercise with the advice of a doctor who can diagnose the cause and the severity of the pain is recommended. Those who remain active with regular exercises, walking, running, and swimming etc, are less likely to suffer from lower back pain than those people who are not exercising at all.

Lower back pain is caused due to inadequate exercise of some of the muscles [extensors (back and gluteal muscles), Flexors (abdominal and Iliopsoas muscles), Obliques or Rotators (side muscles)] that support the spine. Some of these muscles get enough exercise due to daily activities but majority of them are not exercised and become weak as age catches up. You can relax your muscles and relieve yourself of the lower back pain by lower back pain exercise consisting of stretching, strengthening and aerobics which are recommended to be done as per advice of a doctor.

Lower back pain exercise recommended by orthopedic surgeon and physical therapist for 10 to 30 minutes for two three times a day may bring you much wanted relief from pain. Following Lower back pain exercises to relieve the stress and pain are recommended.

### Lying on back

- Moving ankles up and down slowly, bending and straightening knee at least 10 times
- With both the knees bent and hands resting below the ribs tighten abdominal muscles to press the ribs down towards the back at least 10 times without holding your breath. Relax at the same time.
- With one knee bent, lift leg straight above about 6 to 12 inches above the ground and holding this position for 1 to 1.5 second and then lower the leg slowly repeating it for about 10 times,
- Pull the leg up, straighten up and stretch one leg at a time by holding on to a towel wrapped behind the foot

## Standing

- While leaning against a wall with both feet at least 12 inches away from the wall keeping abdominal muscles tight slowly bend both the knees 45 degrees for 5 seconds and returning them slowly in to upright position and repeating it 10 times.
- Standing on both the feet and slowly raising heels up and down at least 10 times,
- Hamstring exercise also relieves the lower back pain, but the commonest lower back pain exercise is to bend forward with legs kept straight trying to touch the toes and remaining in that position for some time.

## Aerobic

- Exercise on a stationary bike and a tread mill for 20 to 30 minutes.

## Sitting

- Sitting on a chair and placing both the legs straight on to another chair in front try to touch your toes while bending forward.

*Paul Osborne is the executive editor of <http://backpain-resources-online.com> & <http://lowerbackpainrelief.org> Both sites offer a host of information, tips and advice for lower back pain relief.*

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## Relieve Your Neck Pain with Yoga

By [Michael Russell](#)

Everyone gets a little stiff neck once in a while, and yoga can wipe away the pain with a few concentrated exercises. First, though, you must be certain the pain isn't related to something more serious than a simple stiff neck. Instead of yoga, see a doctor if any one of the following is true:

- Your neck pain has persisted for more than three days, or it keeps coming back.
- Your neck pain is accompanied by dizziness or nausea.
- The pain seems to radiate down into your arms or legs.
- The pain began with a fall or accident.

If your stiff neck does NOT meet any of the above conditions, these simple yoga exercises can help increase your neck's flexibility and strengthen the neck muscles. By exercising you speed blood and needed nutrients to the area, easing the neck pain gradually. Try these:

### Neck Stretches

Sitting cross-legged, tall and straight, and inhale eyes forward. Exhale, moving chin to chest. Repeat this breath five times, the fifth time holding chin to chest breathing three times through the nose. Inhale, raising the head to center again. This time drop your right ear to your right shoulder during the exhale. Repeat this breath five times, the fifth time holding ear to shoulder for three breaths. Repeat this sequence with the left ear to left shoulder.

### Half-Circle Rolls

Drop your chin to your chest. Slowly roll it up to your right shoulder, down to center, up to the left shoulder and down to center. Repeat this three to five times. Never roll the head in a full circle, as this can cause damage.

### Shoulder Hunches

Hunch your shoulders up as high as you can, then relax them completely. Repeat five to six times. Next roll your shoulders in forward circles five to six times, then backward circles five to six times. Notice how relaxed your shoulders feel. Try this quick relaxation exercise any time you feel tension building.

### **Chest Expander**

Stand with your feet together and your fingers interlaced behind your back. Inhale while raising your hands behind your back, squeezing your shoulder blades together and tucking your tailbone under to keep from over-arching your back. Hold this position for three to four breaths, then lower your arms slowly during the next exhale.

### **Arm Lifts**

Hold your arms straight out in front of you, parallel to the ground with palms facing each other but not touching. Inhale while bringing them up next to your head. Exhale while you bring them down again. Repeat this four to eight times.

### **Press It**

Place either palm on the back of your head. Simultaneously press the head and hand against each other for a count of ten. Move the palm to the forehead and repeat the pressing for another count of ten. Now place the right palm against the right side of your head and press head and hand together for a count of ten. Repeat with the left palm and left side of the head.

These yoga exercises are designed to relieve physical stress and related pain. The best pain relief is pain prevention, so be sure to watch your posture and set your workspace to avoid slouching.

*Michael Russell*

*Your Independent guide to [Yoga](#)*

*Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Michael\\_Russell](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Michael_Russell)*

## Ease Lower Back Pain - Exercises to a Stronger Healthy Back!

By [John Groth](#)

Exercises to help ease lower back pain and strengthen the stomach and back muscles to reduce the risk of future lower back pain.

Regular exercise is necessary to help restore the strength of your back and help you make a gradual return to regular activity. With the approval of your doctor, there are a number of exercises for your lower back you should try to help relieve or ease the pain in your lower back. You will get the best results with ten to twenty minutes of lower back exercises, one to three times a day.

Your doctor or physical therapist will normally suggest some of the following exercises for lower back pain. Be careful that you are doing the exercises correctly and have them supervised by the therapist. After you are doing them correctly and you having some positive results you can do them on your own.

Start with ankle pumps where you lie on your back and move your ankles up and down slowly; start with ten repetitions and slowly increase over a period of several weeks, to twenty repetitions.

Still on your back, slowly bend and straighten your knee ten times. Do ten with the right knee and then ten with your left knee. Over time you can increase the repetitions to 20 on each leg.

The abdominal contraction has you lying on your back with your knees bent and your hands resting below your ribs. Tighten your stomach muscles to squeeze your ribs down toward your back - remember to breathe. Hold for five seconds and repeat ten times. Straight leg raises have you on your back - still - with one leg bent and the other straight. Tighten your stomach muscles to stabilize your lower back, and then lift your leg six to twelve inches and hold for one to five seconds. Repeat this exercise ten times.

Heel raises have you standing. Raise your heels up and down slowly ten times. Finally, for your initial set of exercises for lower back pain, is the wall squats. Stand with your back against the wall. Walk your feet out about twelve inches in front of your body, slide your body down, and keep your stomach muscles tight, so that your knees are at a 45 degree angle. Hold for five seconds, return to your upright position, and repeat ten times.

After you have accomplished these initial exercises for lower back pain, your therapist or surgeon will give you an intermediate exercise program to work on, while still working with the initial set of exercises.

These two exercises for lower back pain add additional strength to the lower back muscles. The single knee to chest stretch has you lying on your back again with both knees bent. Holding your thigh behind your knee, bring that knee up to your chest and hold for twenty seconds. Relax and repeat five times on each side. The hamstring stretch also has you on your back with knees bent. Hold one thigh behind your knee and slowly straighten the knee until you feel a stretch in the back of the thigh. Hold for twenty seconds, relax, and repeat five times on each side.

Your doctor could also prescribe a set of exercises with a Swiss Ball for lumbar stabilization and eventually an advanced set of exercises for lower back pain. All of the exercises prescribed by the doctor or therapist should be done daily, in addition to all the other initial and intermediate exercises that were prescribed.

All these exercises for lower back pain strengthen the core muscles of the stomach as well as the lower back muscles, which in turn strengthen the back for added natural back support. Bottom line, the stronger the muscles that strengthen the back the less likely you will suffer future lower back pain. And you'll find that a daily exercise program is a small price to pay for a healthy pain free back.

*John Groth is a back pain sufferer who has solved his back problems. Go to his web site for more valuable information on [Back Exercises](#) and for a free report on the Relief of Back Pain, and you'll also find guides on a full range of [Back Pain Solutions](#)*

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## Lower Back Pain Exercise To Combat Pains

By [Ricky Lim](#)

The pain in lower part of back is a common muscular problem. It is of three types.

- Acute- this is caused due to accidents or fall.
- Sub acute
- Chronic- this occurs due to course of time like aging weakness in joints, etc

There are various exercises for curing lower back pain.

These are classified under three heads

1. Initial
2. Intermediate
3. Advanced

### Initial lower back pain exercises

- Ankle pumps- moving your ankles up and down while lying on your back
- Heel slides- slowly bending and straightening your knee while lying on your back
- Abdominal contraction- lying down on your back. Tighten your abdominal muscles to squeeze your ribs down toward ground.
- Wall squats- stand while leaning against a wall. Bend both knees to 45 degrees but keep your abdominal muscles tight.
- Heel raiser- raise upon your heels and down.
- Straight leg raiser- lying on your back, keep one leg straight and other leg bent. Slowly lift straight leg up in air and bring down.

## Intermediate lower back pain exercises

- Single knee chest stretch- lying on back, both knees straight. Bring one knee up toward your chest.
- Hamstring stretch- lying on back with holding one of your thighs in air.

## Swiss ball lower back pain exercises

- Lying on your back, as your knees is bending upon the ball. Raise your arm over head and corresponding other leg in air.
- Sitting on the ball, raise your arm overhead and other corresponding leg up from ground about 2 inches in air
- Stand with wall, while ball is in between you and wall. Slowly start bending your knees to 45 degrees, and raise your both arms overhead
- Lying on stomach over the ball, alternatively raise each of your arm and leg in air one by one

## Advanced lower back pain exercises

- Hip flexor stretch- lying on bed, holds knees towards your chest. Leave the knees one by one.
- Piriformis stretch- while lying on your back, cross your legs and pull opposite knees.

Keep yourself in one position at least for 10 seconds and repeat all the exercises for at least 10 times.

Ricky runs a [natural back pain relief](#) site. Visit his website for information on the different [treatment of back pain medication](#).

Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Ricky\\_Lim](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Ricky_Lim)

## 4 Methods To Natural Back Pain Relief

By [Ricky Lim](#)

Back pain is often caused by muscle strains, repeated strenuous exercises and poor sitting posture. It can also be caused if you are lifting heavy loads and is characterized by a sharp pain to your lower back. Here are 4 ways you can use for natural back pain relief without relying on drugs.

### 1. Stretching

Believe it or not, stretching is often the simplest method to relief back pain and by stretching your back gently can relax your back muscles preventing them from becoming tense.

### 2. Reflexology

Reflexology is an alternative medical practice where pressure is applied to various parts of the body to relieve pain and ailments. Reflexology works every well in relieving back pain. It also helps to improve the body's blood circulation and helps to relax your muscles.

### 3. Acupuncture

Acupuncture is an age old Chinese medical practice that has been used for thousands of years. Only recently have the west accepted it as an alternative form of back pain relief. Needles are used and inserted in points on the body and face. The Chinese believed all humans have an energy force called qi. By inserting needles in various parts of the body, it can help to unblock qi and restore the flow.

Studies have been made in acupuncture and the results are quite astounding. Acupuncture can be used to treat almost all kinds of ailments including back pain.

#### 4. Tai Chi

Tai Chi is also another ancient Chinese discipline. It's basically a type of exercise similar to yoga except it is slower. Tai Chi focuses on breathing techniques and is a great way to relax your back. It involves some stretching and breathing exercises that is not too strenuous. Therefore anyone, young or old can take part in Tai Chi.

Besides these 4 methods to natural back pain relief, exercise can also help to relieve back pain. By exercising regularly, there is less chance of a back pain attack.

*Discover the various ways to natural back pain relief without relying on drugs and medications by visiting Ricky's site at <http://www.reliefbackpain.net> today.*

*Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Ricky\\_Lim](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Ricky_Lim)*

## Lower Back Stretches - The Central Ingredient To Relieve Pain

By [Paddy Reilly](#)

Lower back stretches are designed to help loosen and relieve muscle pain in the lower back. You can do much more than any doctor to maintain the health of your lower back, by getting into the habit of stretching on a daily basis. The pain associated with the lower back, can be greatly reduced by a good plan of daily stretches. For lower back pain problems, the pain is usually associated with the muscles. These muscles in the lower back serve a very important role in stabilizing and supporting the spinal column. When these muscles become weak and stiff over time, this in turn can lead to painful spasms in the lower back.

Stretching exercises are very helpful at improving these muscles in the lower back. Even with acute pain or after surgery stretching helps to rebuild strength. However special care is needed while performing any lower back stretches. Stretching should be done gently, without bouncing. Stretch relatively slowly, to the point of discomfort and just a little bit beyond. If pain occurs while stretching release a little, until pain goes away.

There are many different types of back stretches that can be done to relieve pain in the lower back, the five main ones to concentrate on are:

1. **Knees-up rest** - This type of stretch relaxes the muscles in the pelvis, hips and knees which in turn decreases the pressure on the spine.
2. **Knee Raises** - This stretching exercise keeps your spine in a protected position, while stretching the muscles in the knees, buttocks, hips and the lower part of the spine.
3. **Straight Leg Raises** - One of the most powerful stretching exercises to help strengthen the hamstring muscles. When these muscles become tight, they are inclined to pull the back out of alignment. Many back pain problems can be solved by stretching these muscles groups.
4. **Resting Cobra Pose** - This type of stretch helps to align your spine and restore proper posture, it also opens the disc spaces so the spine can breathe.
5. **Serpent Pose** - This is an excellent exercise to improve the curvature of the spine, it also stretches all the muscles in the lower back without putting any pressure on the spine itself.

## Benefits of stretching exercises

- If you have stiffness or injury in the lower back
- If you recently had any type of surgery on the lower back
- If you have a disease condition that results in stiffness
- It warms up the muscles before you start any strengthening exercises
- It makes the lower muscles looser and more flexible
- It may decrease the chances of injury

There's nothing mysterious about the stretching process. Any part of the body that you can't completely straighten or completely bend needs to be frequently and repeatedly stretched; a good rule is twice daily. Over months or even weeks, you can often regain motion of that body part. A very important thing we need to realize when performing any lower back stretches is that the muscles are the greatest source of pain, because they are directly connected to the nerves that transmit pain messages to the brain.

People often worry about doing harm to their joints by doing too much stretching exercises. The truth is the opposite. Those who stretch regularly have much less disability than those who don't, and in the process the muscles and tissue around the joints become stronger.

*Take charge of lower back pain. Visit: <http://hubpages.com/hub/lowerbackstretches> to find out more about lower back stretches.*

*Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Paddy\\_Reilly](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Paddy_Reilly)*

## Back Pain - 3 Essential Stretching Tips

By [Graeme Teague](#)

Are you one of the countless thousands of adults who have back pain? Have you been suffering with back pain, not just for weeks, but years of on again and off again back pain?

Chances are you are like so many adults, 80% in fact that suffer from back pain at some stage. It may disappear with either treatment or a few stretches, but then it returns again soon.

### **Is there a simple approach to help get rid of your back pain once and for all?**

The most common approach is using stretches. Sure they are helpful, but they should be used as part of a total regime. To make sure your back pain disappears completely and permanently you need to release muscle tension, you also need to strengthen weakened muscles and make sure your joints move freely and easily.

But to the tight muscles first...

### **Stretching Tip #1**

The first essential of stretching is knowing how to stretch. The most common stretch is called an isometric stretch. This is where you hold the muscle in a state of tension for about a minute. However this is the least effective way to stretch if you have back problems. It takes too long to do and is less effective at reducing muscle tension.

The best type of stretch is called PNF. It takes less time and reduces muscle tension in days if used correctly. A PNF stretch uses a rebound relaxation of the muscle. You place the muscle in a state of tension then contract the muscle gently.

The best thing is you only need 6 seconds to make this stretch effective.

## **Stretching Tip #2**

The second important tip for stretching is what to stretch. There is no point knowing how to use an effective stretch, such as PNF, if you stretch the wrong muscles.

Targeting the correct muscles not only removes your back pain quickly, it will also prevent it returning. Muscles need to be stretched on each side, not just on the side of pain.

You also need to stretch the muscles that change the posture of your spine. The reason is simple enough. Where your back pain is, does not mean this is where the problem is.

For example, if you have neck pain, it can be caused by your lower back being tight. The same applies for your lower back, it may be caused by your muscles in the lower leg and postural changes have occurred which allows lower back pain.

Stretching needs to target the correct muscles or back pain will remain or return again soon.

## **Stretching Tip #3**

The most important part of stretching is not how or what to stretch, but when to stretch.

When you stretch a muscle, you are trying to remove tension. In other words you want the muscle to relax. So if you use a muscle as soon as you stretch it, that relaxation will disappear.

Knowing when to stretch is therefore most essential. The best way to stretch is using PNF, you then need to target the right muscles and then stretch them 3 times a day. The most important thing is to relax the muscle after you have stretched it.

Knowing when to use stretches is an area seldom looked at. This is the main reason why there are so many ineffective stretching routines. This is why so many adults seek help time and time again.

Back pain will remain unless you address the 3 causes of back pain - your tight muscles, weakened muscles and joint imbalance. Knowing how, what and when to stretch is an essential part of this process.

*Are you one of the over 80% of adults suffering from back pain? Then you need simple, valuable and expert advice - visit [The Back Pain Advisor](#)*

*If you have back pain, neck pain or sciatica ... do you want to get rid of it once and for all ... then click here [The X-Pain Method](#)*

*Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Graeme Teague](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Graeme_Teague)*

## *Exercises To Avoid!*

### **Gabrielle's notes for this Chapter:**

Knowing which exercises to avoid is probably the most important thing when it comes to fixing your back.

I am a great believer in teaching all my students the right way to do a sit-up. Both Kevin Yates and Jim Keizer speak eloquently about the reasons why you should not do 'traditional' sit-ups. Shortening the front side of the body is absolutely contraindicated as are 'crunches'. Yates advises against using machines to do your work especially if you are using them to push you beyond your capabilities. I just love it when there are other experts out there who validate the methods that I teach to do the sit-up. If your body isn't in some kind of balance, if you are relying on brute strength of your upper body (propelling yourself up with your neck and rectus abdominus) instead of using your hips flexors balanced with even reasonable core muscle strength then sit-ups are better avoided for the time being.

In yoga classes I am constantly meeting runners and other hard core athletes who are trying to counter the ill-effects of muscles shortening activities. Take things easy, don't be concerned that you have to avoid exercises that you have normally enjoyed. Have some humility and work on the fundamentals. Running would definitely be off my menu if I had back pain, and if you want to strengthen your back in a gym using machines, then start on the mildest or lightest settings. Repeating gentle exercises that build at the deepest levels is certainly better. Depending on the exercise, keep your hips or legs or back or shoulders anchored.

## The 5 Worst Exercises For Lower Back Pain

By [Kevin Yates](#)

Did you know that some of the worst exercises for your lower back are the exact ones that are typically recommended by health care professionals for low back pain sufferers?

It's no secret that most lower back pain sufferers have very weak abdominal muscles. As a result, those who experience frequent low back pain are usually told to perform exercises for the lower back and abdominal muscles.

It has been my experience in working with countless low back pain sufferers to avoid certain exercises at all costs. If you want to relieve your low back pain then you need to know the 5 worst exercises for your low back.

**#1: Sit-ups**- I have never had a client of mine perform a traditional sit-up. Sit-ups are the absolute worst exercise for low back pain. Now, most health professionals have gotten away from recommending this exercise, but there still are some who do. Sit-ups pose a couple of major problems.

First, performing the exercise with hands behind your head can aggravate or develop strain on your cervical spine (your neck). Because of the typical abdominal weakness most low back pain sufferers have, they cannot effectively initiate movement of the trunk by engaging the abdominals. So, instead they begin to pull at the head which causes strain to the cervical spine.

Second, sit-ups involve the hip flexors more than the abdominals. Your hip flexors are active in such movements where you bring your knee up. For example, when walking up a flight of stairs your hip flexors lift your leg to you can put your foot up on the next step.

But, your hip flexors also attach to each vertebrae on your lumbar spine, or your lower back. When you overuse these muscles they generate force that pulls from the attachment at your lower back which causes stress to your lower back.

**#2: Crunches**- Traditional crunches were used as a safe alternative to the sit-up. Technically, crunches utilize the abdominals and stretch the lower back erectors which can help alleviate low back pain.

But, here a few interesting facts that make crunches one of the top 5 worst exercises for your low back:

*fact #1*- crunches primarily engage the rectus abdominis, commonly called the "six pack" muscles. The rectus abdominis functions to flex your spine as when bending forward at the waist. Crunches fail to engage the entire abdominal complex (internal obliques, external obliques and transverse abdominis). Your entire abdominal complex is what provides a strong and stable foundation for your lower back.

*fact #2*- the more crunches you perform over time your body eventually begins to develop a stooped forward posture or "hunch back". This is really bad because it puts a lot of stress on your lower back. It also weakens the muscles of your upper and mid-back which are extremely important to maintain good posture and protect your lower back.

*fact #3*- the majority of low back pain sufferers are considered overweight to some extent. So, exercise focused on burning more calories and body fat is an important key to managing back pain. The less fat you carry around your midsection the less stress to your lower back. Crunches are one of the least effective exercises for burning calories.

**#3- Leg raises**- This exercise is probably the 2nd worst exercise you can do for lower back pain for the same reason as sit-ups. Leg raises have the potential to involve the hip flexors even more than sit-ups because your legs are longer and weigh more. This exercise can really exacerbate low back pain.

**#4- Torso twists on machines**- This exercise involves sitting on a machine where you hold a couple handles with a pad at your chest and twist from side to side pulling weight from the machine. Too many people load up this machine with too much weight and/or perform the twist improperly which can create shearing forces at the spine and injure the disks that protect your spine.

**#5- Low back extensions-** This is the machine where you sit with a weighted pad at your back. You lean forward then push yourself back up to sitting upright against the resisted pad. Low back pain does not necessarily mean you have a "weak low back" and need to strengthen it. At least not in this manner. This type of movement overuses the muscles of the lower back which is one of the most common reasons why people develop low back problems in the first place.

So, performing this exercise only compounds the initial problem by training you to overuse your lower back muscles.

*Kevin Yates is a certified Personal Trainer and Sports Performance Coach with a 2 ½ year background in Physical Therapy as an aide. He has been working in the fitness industry for the last 7 years helping various populations of individuals and athletes burn fat, gain muscle, improve sports performance, maximize their fitness potential and improve their quality of life.*

[Learn more](#)

Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Kevin\\_Yates](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Kevin_Yates)

## Lower Back Pain - The Three Exercises That May Be Causing Your Pain

By [Jim Keizer](#)

As a corrective exercise coach, part of my job is to trace the root of any pain or problem to its source. Over time, the same culprits keep popping up again and again. So, in an effort to keep you from falling victim to these exercise villains, I am publishing my list of repeat offenders.

### 1. Abdominal crunches and leg raises.

Everyone is obsessed with abdominals and, as a result, most people end up over working them; and worse, working them improperly. Over-working your crunches simply adds to a flexion-chain imbalance, pulling your hip forward and your ribcage down...making you look “slumped” and exposing you to a flat back syndrome and back pain.

Lying leg raises are a big offender and the hanging leg raises produce so much force through the sacroiliac joint and lower lumbar that it is very dangerous for the average person.

Here is a test you can do if you are currently doing leg lifts. Lie flat on your back and slide your fingers under your lower back on each side. Now, slowly apply pressure to your fingers by flexing your abs. Not too much pressure, just enough so that you can tell that your abs are activated. Now, keeping equal pressure, try lifting just one leg straight up and slowly back down without losing any pressure or “squishing” your fingers.

If you cannot pass this lower ab strength test, what do you suppose is working when you have been doing your leg raises? Not your lower abs since they cannot even stabilize one leg properly. This results in compensation throughout the kinetic chain and a LOT of activation of the lower back just to stabilize the discs. In other words...murder on your back.

### 2. Running:

This will be a not-so-welcome addition for many of my avid runners. However, In my experience, I find that running poses a threat to the back in two ways:

First, people who are just looking to get into shape very often default to running to “lose that extra weight.” The major issue here is that when you run, you multiply the shock of each step by several times that of simply walking. For a deconditioned person, this means that the ligaments and tendons are too weak to handle the load, particularly if the individual is already carrying around extra weight. This can lead to major joint dysfunction in the knees, hips, and sacroiliac joint, causing the muscles around these joints to spasm and cause pain.

Second, my avid runners often develop huge muscle strength imbalances due to the constant repetition of running. Chronically tight hamstrings, caused by a lack of glute function, will pull the pelvis down and cause a flat back resulting in lumbar pain. I call these people my “no butt” clients because they have a flat back tight, chest, and slumped shoulders giving them the appearance of slouching and flat bottoms. Unfortunately, this posture is also reinforced by sitting in a chair all day at work and eventually the lower back loses too much curve, the spine can no longer distribute the force of running efficiently, and we get pain as muscles spasm.

### **3. Seated Leg Press or Sled Press.**

My guys are notorious for piling a ton of weight on this machine to impress their friends. Unfortunately, most of them do not have the flexibility to actually do the proper movement through the entire range and end up recruiting their lower back to move all of that weight.

Simply put, if you are lying against the pad, your lower back should NEVER come off of the mat. If you cannot bring the sled down far enough to complete the range of motion, you need to stretch your hams, glutes, and calves or switch to a more functional (and in my opinion more beneficial) standing squat as long as your form is good.

Imagine your glutes being very tight and your lower back curling off of the mat on the way down. What muscles do you suppose have to activate in order for you to push the sled back up? Yes, your lower back erectors. This is a great way to slip a disc or traumatize your lower back muscles.

This list is not an “AVOID AT ALL COSTS” list. I do, however recommend that you avoid these exercises until you have any postural problems cared for by a corrective exercise coach or physical therapist. If you have a healthy back, and are currently doing these activities, make sure that you are doing them properly so you maintain your healthy back.

You can watch for signs of chronic tightness (stiffness that will not stretch out over time) as a good indicator that something in your exercise routine is causing a muscle imbalance. Make sure that you go to a professional who is trained to assess and correct these imbalances and give you a new exercise routine which will keep your joints healthy and strong.

*Jim Keizer is an elite exercise and holistic lifestyle coach with a thriving practice in the heart of Miami's South Beach. He specializes in corrective exercise and holistic nutrition and founded his clinic with the bold vision on "Inspiring over 1 million people to health and healing by 2010."*  
<http://www.keizersclinic.com> <http://southbeachedge.blogspot.com>  
<http://painfreelife.blogspot.com>

Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Jim\\_Keizer](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Jim_Keizer)

## *Preventing Back Issues*

### **Gabrielle's notes for this Chapter:**

This last group of articles gives us some great ideas to incorporate into daily life whether a student, a desk jockey or stay at home mom. From how, when and how long to sit, to diet, hydration and some little ways to stay relieve the effects of poor posture.

John Groth gives us some well overdue commonsense guidelines which will help instil in our kids proper habits to promote lifelong spinal health. My body developed a scoliosis which was most likely the result of carrying a heavy schoolbag from one shoulder. Even in junior high I worked out myself that I should be wearing a backpack (years before they were in fashion). Back then there was not the care taken to produce bag ware that satisfied correct design principles. Thankfully Bikram Yoga practiced frequently over many months reversed this condition so that it is imperceptible to the untrained eye.

I hope that I have amassed a selection of articles which are thought provoking and also commonsense and easy to apply. If you do happen to have some pain or discomfort remember Graeme Teague's recommendations: avoid sudden movement, and lift with mindfulness. Keep appropriately active. Not enough to aggravate but sufficient to keep your body from seizing up. Overly exercising and total bed rest are equally discouraged.

I have never been a fan of taking a pill to cure any and all ills. I believe in always taking the less invasive approach. Sometimes taking medicine will be the answer. But it is rarely the long term one! Sometimes it is worth it to allow your muscles to stop spasming enough to relax them and resolve the issue. Just like S. L. Simmons writes: you may have to try a number of different therapists before you find one who has the approach that suits you or works for you.

Finally Paul Osborne suggests creating the balance between flexibility and strength: something for which yoga is renowned. Teach your muscles to hold your body in correct posture and reduce strain. But don't undo all the good effort: make the right investment in your comfort in bed by buying the right mattress. All very sound advice.

## Back Pain Starts Young - Tips to Ease the Burden

By [John Groth](#)

We've all seen the TV documentary where the scurrying ants are carrying portions of leaves and other vegetation back to their nest. Many loads carried by the ants exceed the ant's weight. An almost similar scene is repeated every day at schools all across the county, and kids weighted down with overloaded backpacks trudging back and forth to school. Many only have to trudge with the heavy backpack from home to the bus and from the bus into school but the strain on their backs are obvious and could be damaging.

So book reports, various projects and science exams aren't the only pressures on your kids at school. Wearing and walking with heavy backpacks, especially when wearing them the wrong way can lead to back pain, muscle strain and overall poor posture. In a recent study, almost 60% of students reported chronic back pain related to them.

It's not only the back that takes a beating from the heavy backpacks. In a recent year almost 7000 emergency room visits were related to these injuries. They included ankle sprains from tripping over backpacks, broken bones from them falling on hands and strained shoulder and back muscles from lifting and lugging heavy backpacks. Almost half of the reported injuries occurred to children age 5 to 14.

**Here are some tips to keep students safe and ease the burdens on their backs:**

**Load the Backpack Tight and Light:** A loaded one should not weigh more than 15% of the student's body weight. When loading them, pack heavier items first so they are closer to the back. Pack the bag tight so items do not slide around. If it's absolutely necessary to have extra heavy loads provide them with a tote bag to hand carry some items or something with wheels that they can pull.

**Wear the Backpack Properly:** They are made to be worn on the back with both arms through the shoulder straps. Wearing the pack over one shoulder, dangling from one arm or draped around the neck can cause many strains and other injuries. When selecting a backpack, make sure it has well padded shoulder straps and keep the straps adjusted so the pack fits snugly against the student's back. Always look for comfort rather than what happens to be cool.

**Measure the Backpack:** They should not be larger than the child carrying it. In looking at the proper size the bottom of it should rest on the curve of the lower back and should not sit more than 3 inches below the waistline. Upgrade the backpack as the child grows.

**If Possible Downsize:** Why carry a heavy book back and forth that only gets opened once a week? How about heavy binders with mostly blank paper? Do they need to be carried around? Make a game of downsizing the burden. Perhaps a duplicate book or workbook at home could reduce the load.

With these tips perhaps you can keep your student from having an accident with the overly heavy backpack or reduce or eliminate possible back pain.

*John Groth is a back pain sufferer who has solved his back problems. For more valuable information on [Back Pain Relief](#) and for a free report on the Relief of Back Pain, you'll also find guides on a full range of [Back Pain Solutions](#).*

Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=John\\_Groth](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=John_Groth)

## 10 Tips for Alleviating Back Pain from a Physical Therapist!

By [Nancy Redlich](#)

Almost all of us at some time or other will experience back and/or neck pain throughout our lives. Most of us know that when we sit in one place for too long, bent forward, either so focused on a project in front of us or at a computer, we end up with an aching back and/or neck. Some of us know that we have spent years at the same job doing repetitive activities or movements that end up straining our muscles and joints. Of course there are the times when we do our share of weekend chores and wind-up pulling weeds, mowing the grass, raking leaves or shoveling snow and by the next day we can barely move out of bed. For some of us that old "injury" creeps back every once in a while until one day it becomes more and more noticeable and more intense. For whatever reason, we know that over time, life has found its way to accumulate on our bodies. Compensations begin to develop and we become stiffer, less flexible and more out of balance.

How then do we stop this from happening? What can we do that will help reduce our symptoms and make an impact on our pain?

There are many ways to treat back & neck pain and of course there are many different causes for that pain. It is difficult to treat every individual with a "cookie-cutter" approach, however, there are simple things that can make significant changes in helping to reduce that pain.

### **The following are 10 tips for easing back & neck pain:**

1. When sitting at a desk/computer: position yourself at eye-level to your computer screen & make sure you are not having to turn your head to one side.
2. When sitting at a desk/computer: try to position your hips higher than your knees: this will throw your shoulders back and reduce the strain on your neck.
3. Do NOT sit for more than 50 minutes at one time. Stand up and stretch backward with your hands on your hips & knees straight, inhale deeply, exhale and stretch a little further. Repeat 3 times.

4. To relieve upper back & neck tension: Clasp your hands behind your head, elbows apart, try to squeeze your shoulder blades together without shrugging, inhale, then exhale & stretch a little further (eyes & head gaze upward). Repeat 3-5 times.
5. To relieve lower back tension & pain: Stand at a counter ( bathroom height) resting one foot or calf. With your back STRAIGHT, lean your chest forward toward your foot, while reaching your hand toward your ankle. Inhale, exhale and stretch forward. Repeat 3 breath cycles 3 x each side.
6. When an injury or strain just occurs, using ice wrap or cold application within the first 48 hours works best. However, alternating between hot & cold every 20 minutes for up to 2 hours/day can be a good alternative.
7. Drink a lot of water. When recovering from an injury, our bodies require a lot of hydration to support healing. A good guideline is to drink in oz. the equivalent of 1/2 your body weight. For example, if someone weighs 150 lbs. they should drink 75 oz. water per day!
8. Take 1-2 tablespoons of Omega Fish Oils (EFA): rich in Omega 3,6 & 9 these essential fatty acids act like an "oil change for the brain." They have anti-inflammatory properties and help with promoting nervous system functions.
9. Stretch in the shower. Not only does the hot water help to improve localized heating to the muscles if you add a stretch while letting the water beat down, you will alleviate tension and pain. To help neck tension: try tilting your ear to one shoulder while taking that same-side hand on top of your head, gently let the weight of your head fall toward the side as you give yourself a little assist with your hand. To alleviate back tension: Place one hand on your hip as you lift one arm over head toward that side. Reach toward one side while you push your hips to the opposite side with your hand. This will help reduce tension to the muscles on the side of your back that often cause back pain.

10. Try to walk or exercise 20 min./day. Regular exercise whether it be walking, swimming, yoga, pilates or weight-training will improve your mobility, strength and tolerance to functional activities in your daily life that could prevent you from becoming injured.

As a Physical Therapist, I have treated thousands with neck & back pain. As mentioned above, there are many causes of pain, however with awareness comes knowledge. I educate my patients all of the time and teach them exercises, techniques and health information that they can use for the rest of their lives.

*Nancy Redlich, MSPT is a Physical Therapist with over 15 years of experience. Her specialty is in treating spinal dysfunctions. She has earned two Master's degrees, one in the area of Manual Therapy. She currently treats patients in her private practice in Orange County, CA where she utilizes a whole-body approach to her therapy. She has written an Ebook entitled "Quick & Simple Solutions for Back Pain" which outlines strategies, exercises and alternatives to traditional drug-therapy.*

For more information go to => <http://www.quickreliefnow.com>

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## Back Pain - 3 Things to Avoid

By [Graeme Teague](#)

Back pain statistics are not a pretty sight. In fact almost 50% of you reading this will be doing so with back pain now. And over 80% of you will have back pain at some stage soon.

So when it arrives there are 3 things you need to be aware of to help your pain ease faster. Follow this advice and you can avoid aggravating your back pain and actually help it disappear.

The first thing you need to avoid is any sudden movement. Most movement in your day is automatic - you have to pick up your child, you shift a chair, pick up groceries and so many other activities. For now you need to do this in a more controlled manner.

Think before you lift. Look at what you will lift and how you can do it without aggravating your back pain. If possible, get someone else to lift it for you.

The second thing to avoid is bed rest. Studies have shown that you are better to keep moving than to lie in bed. If you are active then you help to keep your joints moving and also muscles relaxed. This does not mean you should get out there and try and do everything.

What you need to do is just keep active. You need to move around your house or workplace. You still need your rest because overdoing it will aggravate your back pain.

Generally keep active though. This leads you to the final piece of advice.

Exercise is good but overly physical exercise should be avoided. Being active is one thing, being silly is another! The best exercise is gentle and balanced.

This means activities such as swimming, walking or even cycling are good. Do them gently and do not try to over exert yourself. Exercise again helps to keep your joints moving freely and helps your muscles from becoming too tight.

However over-exercise will aggravate your back pain. Do not try to play sports such as tennis, squash or even golf - especially if you are very competitive. When you play sport with others you end up trying to win and can easily be pulled into the "must win" style of exercise. It is better to play and lose than to play and "lose".

What this means is participate and have fun rather than try to win and find out you have lost. Lost the ability to stand up, lost the ability to tie your shoe laces because back pain is now too severe. Or lost to the point where you need to spend more time and money seeking help ... when doing things sensibly could have helped you ease your pain.

Back pain statistics are frightening; my advice is not to make these worse. Learn to remove your back pain and avoid the 3 most common causes of aggravation - sudden movement, bed rest, over exercise.

*Are you one of the over 80% of adults suffering from back pain? Then you need simple, valuable and expert advice - visit [The Back Pain Advisor](#)*

*If you have back pain, neck pain or sciatica ... do you want to get rid of it once and for all ... then click here [The X-Pain Method](#)*

*Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Graeme\\_Teague](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Graeme_Teague)*

## Five Tips for Preventing Back Pain in Office Workers

By [S. L. Simmons](#)

As one of the most common medical problems, health experts estimate that up to 80% of the population in the U.S. will be affected by back pain at some point in their lives. Listed below are some tips to help keep you in the 20% of people with healthy backs.

1. Watch your posture, especially at work. When at your desk, do you keep your back straight most of the time, or do you continually lean forward at an angle? Sitting hunched over at your desk for extended periods can cause the muscles on the front of your torso to shorten and your back muscles to become weak and stretched out. Over time, office workers with muscle imbalances from a continually slumped posture may develop rounded shoulders and a forward neck posture, leading to chronic back and neck pain.
2. Get regular exercise that uses all of your major muscle groups. Even with the best posture at work, our bodies simply were not designed to be sitting in front of a computer all day. Muscles kept at bent positions for long periods can become contracted and may become difficult to fully extend when doing other tasks. Muscles not used at all can atrophy from inactivity. If you sit at a desk all day long, try to have some form of regular exercise scheduled outside of work to keep your joints lubricated and your muscles moving freely.
3. Try to take regular stretch breaks at your desk. Set a timer to remind you to take a break every 30 minutes, or purchase software with a window that pops up with simple stretches you can do at your desk.
4. Try yoga for back pain prevention. Yoga is often helpful for back pain sufferers, as performing a variety of different types of postures generally help to stretch and strengthen all of the body's major muscles groups. Yoga can help prevent back pain by keeping muscles balanced, moving freely and by lengthening and "decompressing" restricted areas of tightness. Sitting all day can cause a person's spine to become contracted and compressed. Office workers often find the back bend positions in yoga good counter balance exercises to being hunched forward over a computer keyboard all day long.

Please note that if you already suffer from back pain and have limited movement, many of the postures in a general yoga class may be too difficult for you to perform. In that case, see a qualified yoga therapist for therapeutic exercises that may help. There are also many yoga books and videos available with gentle exercises specifically designed for people with chronic back pain.

5. If you've tried physical therapy for back pain and it didn't help, don't give up. Consider trying a different therapist with a different style and training. I'm convinced that physical therapy can, in some ways, be more of an art than a science. Just as not everyone who goes to art school becomes a great artist, not everyone with a degree in physical therapy excels at her career. The first two physical therapists I tried for back pain made me worse. The second one I tried gave me exercises that were aggravating my back, yet when I protested that I was getting worse instead of better, she told me to "work through the pain". At the end of my therapy sessions with her, I was in so much pain I could barely walk. (If nothing else, it was good lesson that continuing to exercise when in severe pain is probably never a good idea.) Yet the third therapist I tried helped me tremendously by analyzing my posture and giving me gentle, posture balancing exercises.

Eat a healthy diet of whole foods. Make sure to consume at least the minimum recommended daily requirement for magnesium by eating a wide variety of magnesium rich foods. Among hundreds of other functions, magnesium is the mineral the body needs to release muscles. Without adequate magnesium, muscles can't relax, and may become tight and contracted, not just in the back but also everywhere in the body. Good food sources of magnesium include pumpkin seeds, Brazil nuts, halibut and white beans.

Please note that any information in this article should be considered as general information only and should not be used to diagnose or treat back pain or any other health condition. See your doctor for a diagnosis and treatment of any medical concerns you may have, and before implementing any diet, exercise, supplement or other lifestyle changes.

Article by S. L. Simmons, editor at The Connective Tissue Disorder Site, <http://www.ctds.info>  
For more information on back pain from scoliosis (spinal curvature), visit our page on [yoga and other alternative health treatments for scoliosis](#).

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## Back Pain Treatment: Simple Ways to Maintain a Healthy Back

By [Paul D Osborne](#)

We take care of our hands, feet, head and all other parts of the body except the back. But when it starts hurting you cannot bear it. It is one of the most common ailments in the US and the ACE has taken cognizance of that fact and come up with 10 ways for back pain treatment in other words the mantra to maintain a healthy back.

A healthy weight is a prerequisite for a healthy back. The extra weight takes its toll on not only the back but the whole body so control your weight. Moreover you also need to toughen the back and abdominal muscles; the abdominals for a strong core that protect the back and this is of primary importance if you are playing tennis or sitting at a desk all day. These are the basic ways you can avoid back pain treatment and have a healthy back.

Proper lifting of items is also prerequisite for back pain treatment or more aptly to maintain a healthy back. Your back is the most sensitive region when you are lifting any object and you must protect it by keeping the spine in proper alignment along with spreading your feet apart as you lift. This also makes it mandatory that you strengthen the muscles of your legs as along with core muscles they help you to maintain a good posture and body mechanics, thus playing a vital role in taking much of the burden off the back when you are lifting heavy items.

Being flexible is half the battle won in the context of back pain treatment, and you must make your body more flexible by various forms of exercise like yoga, tai chi etc. The maintenance of a good posture cannot be stressed enough as it takes pressure off the discs and muscles when you are moving your body correctly thus reducing the strain on your back. Apart from this the less stress the better. Stress is one of the reasons why muscles on the back tense up and this must be avoided at all costs.

Moreover, to maintain a healthy back you must learn to warm up before any activity, this allows your cold muscles and joints to work properly. In the end you must take care of your comfort and the best way to do this is to buy a good mattress, it should give rest to your back, thus resulting in back pain treatment. And last but not the least your lower back must get some support in the form of a small pillow or a rolled towel to make sitting comfortable. Follow all the ten suggestions and you will see yourself maintaining a healthy back.

*Paul Osborne is the executive editor of <http://backpain-resources-online.com> & <http://lowerbackpainrelief.org> Both sites offer a host of information, tips and advice for lower back pain relief.*

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Thank you for reading!

Please head over to [www.HotYogaDoctor.com](http://www.HotYogaDoctor.com) and feel free to leave your comments about this on the blog – I'd love to hear them!

Namaste

Gabrielle

You can find more Hot Yoga resources at:

<http://www.bikram-yoga-noosa-australia.com/>

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**Introducing: The Hot Yoga MasterClass™** 

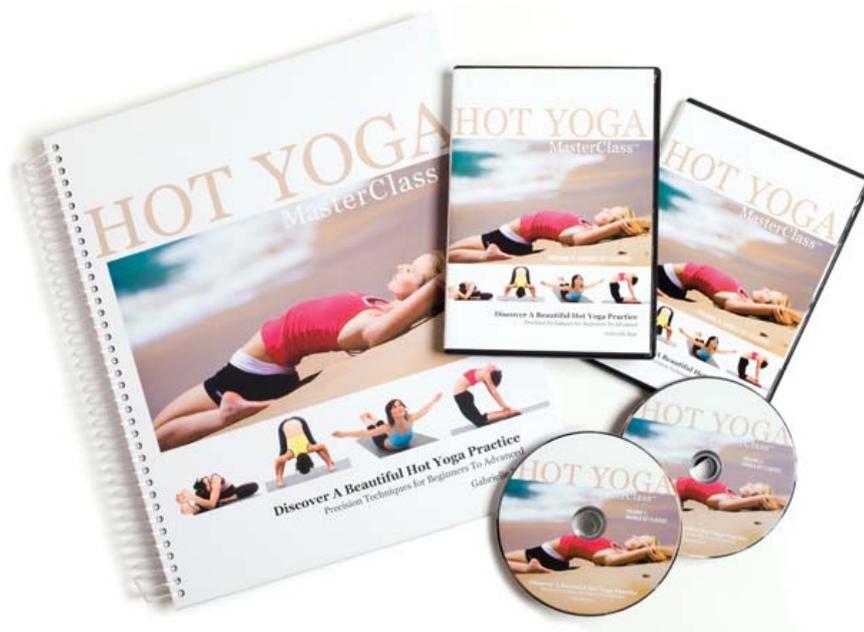
Whether you are just starting your hot yoga or Bikram method yoga practice, or you are a hard-core regular, this **brand new resource** will accelerate your results and have you enjoying a new depth of benefits like never before!

*I purchased the entire package and have not stopped reading and rereading yet! I choose one pose to critique in my 90 minute Bikram session and make the adjustments suggested in the text. My backbend has never been this deep! How do I know, the instructor commented that it looked good!*

*FayeJ, FL, USA*

*Wow... Gabrielle, you and your team, have developed a fabulous resource - I love the whole set. Even though I am new to Bikram yoga, I practice at two studios because I value the different perspectives offered by each teacher. Your gorgeous book is filled with amazing pictures and explanations, and it offers a whole new insight. I had been resisting some poses in class. Because I now understand the intent of these poses, they have become favorites! You have fuelled my addiction to Bikram yoga... and of all the addictions to have, I believe it is a pretty good one!*

*Shona, Brisbane, Australia*



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Common Causes of Back Pain There are many things that can cause chronic back pain while traveling, some of which we have already mentioned here. Additionally, if you already have health conditions that could lead to back pain, traveling can exacerbate it. Some of the most common causes of back pain include: Muscle imbalances or strains due to sitting or standing with poor posture for long periods of time. Injury prevention: Yoga is also excellent for preventing injuries. It's great not only at strengthening your muscles, but also correcting muscle imbalances you may have developed over the years. We often develop muscle imbalances from repeating the same actions over and over, which can create weaknesses in opposing muscles. Do them regularly to help prevent back pain caused by poor mobility. If you're new to yoga, try to commit to taking a little time each day to do these poses. If you already have back pain, be sure to talk to your doctor first to make sure that these exercises are compatible with your condition. For each of the following poses, you will find links to complete instructions and a detailed explanation of how the pose helps prevent back pain.

2. Cat-Cow Stretch Improves Spinal Mobility and Awareness. Help relieve and prevent future back pain with this back friendly beginner yoga flow. Many yoga practices involve an overemphasis on forward flexion movement of the spine, which can actually exacerbate back pain issues. This gentle practice focuses on extension poses and exercises in addition to building strength and flexibility throughout the body to help support and protect the spine. Do you suffer from back pain? Sit at a desk or in your car all day? There are loads of solutions like pillows made from memory foam are great. Then you MUST try this routine (be sure to complete the FULL session for all the amazing benefits)! Help relieve and prevent future back pain with this back friendly beginner yoga flow.