

Understanding Low Back Pain

Treatment Options

Most people benefit from a combination of treatments to relieve pain and maintain mobility.

Activity Modification

Taking regular breaks, avoiding long periods of sitting, and adjusting posture during daily tasks can help reduce discomfort.

Medication

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve) may help reduce inflammation. These medications are most effective when taken consistently for 10 to 14 days as prescribed.

Physical Therapy

Treatment may include heat, ice, or massage, along with guided exercises that target flexibility and strength in the back and abdominal muscles. Aerobic activity such as walking or swimming may also be recommended to improve endurance and support spinal health.



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Low back pain is one of the most common physical complaints. It can range from mild and short-lived to severe and long-lasting. While back pain affects people of all ages, it can make everyday activities more difficult when it occurs.

Although it is not always preventable, many strategies can help reduce the severity, frequency, and impact of low back pain.

Anatomy of the Spine

Your spine is made up of small bones called vertebrae, which are stacked to form a flexible column. Supporting structures include muscles, ligaments, nerves, and intervertebral disks that cushion movement and provide stability.

The spine is divided into three major regions:

- Cervical (neck)
- Thoracic (mid-back/chest)
- Lumbar (lower back)

These natural curves help absorb shock and support movement. The lower section of the spine includes the sacrum and coccyx—vertebrae that are fused together. The five lumbar vertebrae connect the upper spine to the pelvis and bear most of the body's weight.

Causes of Back Pain

Strains and Sprains

Overstretching or overuse of the muscles and ligaments can cause soreness and inflammation. This is a common cause of temporary back pain.

Herniated Discs

A disc herniates when its soft center bulges out through a tear in the outer layer, placing pressure on nearby nerves.



This can lead to pain, numbness, or weakness in the back or legs.

Degenerative Disc Disease and Osteoarthritis

As we age, the discs between the vertebrae may shrink or collapse, causing the bones to rub together. This can result in pain, stiffness, and decreased mobility.

