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Back Pain

Also called: **Backache, Lumbago**

If you've ever groaned, "Oh, my aching back!", you are not alone. Back pain is one of the most common medical problems, affecting 8 out of 10 people at some point during their lives. Back pain can range from a dull, constant ache to a sudden, sharp pain. Acute back pain comes on suddenly and usually lasts from a few days to a few weeks. Back pain is called chronic if it lasts for more than three months.


Most back pain goes away on its own, though it may take awhile. Taking over-the-counter pain relievers and resting can help. However, staying in bed for more than 1 or 2 days can make it worse.

If your back pain is severe or doesn't improve after three days, you should call your health care provider. You should also get medical attention if you have back pain following an injury [<https://medlineplus.gov/backinjuries.html>] .


Treatment for back pain depends on what kind of pain you have, and what is causing it. It may include hot or cold packs, exercise, medicines, injections, complementary treatments, and sometimes surgery.

NIH: National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases


Start Here

- **Back Pain** [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/back-pain/symptoms-causes/syc-20369906?p=1>]
(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/back-pain/symptoms-causes/syc-20369906?p=1>]
- **Back Pain** [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/health-topics/back-pain>]
 (National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/es/informacion-de-salud/dolor-de-espalda>]
- **Low Back Pain** [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/low-back-pain/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/lumbalgia-es/?adfree=true>]






Diagnosis and Tests

- **Discography (Discogram)** [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/discography>]
(American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/discography>]
- **Lower Back Pain (Symptom Checker Flowchart)** [<https://familydoctor.org/symptom/lower-back-pain/?adfree=true>]
(American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/sintoma/dolor-en-la-parte-baja-de-la-espalda/?adfree=true>]
- **Myelography** [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/myelography/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/mielografia/>]
- **Radiographic Assessment for Back Pain** [<https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Treatments/Assessment-Tools/Radiographic-Assessment-Back-Pain>] (North American Spine Society)

Prevention and Risk Factors

- **Getting It Straight: Improve Your Posture for Better Health** [<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2017/08/getting-it-straight>]  (National Institutes of Health)
Also in Spanish [<https://salud.nih.gov/recursos-de-salud/nih-noticias-de-salud/sentarse-derecho>]
- **Prevent Back Pain** [<https://odphp.health.gov/myhealthfinder/healthy-living/safety/prevent-back-pain>] *Easy-to-Read* (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion)
Also in Spanish [<https://odphp.health.gov/espanol/myhealthfinder/viviendo-sanamente/precauciones-seguridad/prevenir-dolor-espalda>]
- **Prevention: The Best Treatment for Back Pain** [<https://doctorsthatdo.osteopathic.org/prevention-treatment-pain>] (American Osteopathic Association)

Treatments and Therapies

- **6 Things To Know About Massage Therapy for Health Purposes** [<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/tips/things-to-know-about-massage-therapy-for-health-purposes>]  (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health)
- **9 Things To Know About Chronic Low-Back Pain and Complementary Health Practices** [<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/tips/things-to-know-about-chronic-low-back-pain-and-complementary-health-approaches>]  (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health)
- **Back Surgery: When Is It a Good Idea?** [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/back-pain/in-depth/back-surgery/art-20048274?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/back-pain/in-depth/back-surgery/art-20048274?p=1>]
- **Chiropractic: MedlinePlus Health Topic** [<https://medlineplus.gov/chiropractic.html>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/chiropractic.html>]
- **Radiofrequency Neurotomy** [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/radiofrequency-neurotomy/about/pac-20394931?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/tests-procedures/radiofrequency-neurotomy/about/pac-20394931?p=1>]
- **Spinal Injections** [<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/treatment/spinal-injections>] (American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons)
- **Spinal Manipulation: What You Need To Know** [<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/spinal-manipulation-what-you-need-to-know>]  (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health)
- **Under Pressure? Find Relief for Low Back Pain (Acupressure Self-Care)** [<https://news.va.gov/127174/live-whole-health-200-under-pressure-find-relief-for-low-back-pain/>]  (Department of Veterans Affairs)

Living With

- **Office Ergonomics: Your How-To Guide** [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/office-ergonomics/art-20046169?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/office-ergonomics/art-20046169?p=1>]

Related Issues

- **That Pain in Your Back Could Be Linked to Your Feet** [<https://www.foothealthfacts.org/article/that-pain-in-your-back-could-be-linked-to-your-fee>] (American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons)


Videos and Tutorials

- **Prevention: Strengthening** [<https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Prevention/Exercise/Strengthening>] (North American Spine Society)


Test Your Knowledge

- **Test Your Back Pain Knowledge** [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/quiz/007422_52.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/quiz/007422_110.htm]

Statistics and Research

- Retraining the Brain to Treat Chronic Back Pain [<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2022/01/retraining-brain-treat-chronic-back-pain>]  (National Institutes of Health)
Also in Spanish [<https://salud.nih.gov/recursos-de-salud/nih-noticias-de-salud/reeducar-al-cerebro-para-tratar-el-dolor-de-espalda-cronico>]

Clinical Trials



- ClinicalTrials.gov: Low Back Pain [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Low+Back+Pain%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Risk factors of residual back pain after vertebral augmentation in osteoporotic... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40713499>]
- Article: Acceptability of self-completion versus face-to-face use of a vertebral fragility fracture... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40702388>]
- Article: Well-Being, Inflammation, and Physical Activity in Acute and Chronic Back Pain:... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40685555>]
- Back Pain -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Back+Pain%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Find an Expert

- Find a Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Physician [https://members.aapmr.org/AAPMR/AAPMR_FINDER.aspx] (American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation)
- Find a Physical Therapist Near You [<https://www.choosept.com/find-a-pt>] (American Physical Therapy Association)
- National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/>] 
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/es/portal-en-espanol/>]
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/>] 

Women

- Back Pain during Pregnancy [<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/back%20pain%20during%20pregnancy>] (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists)
- Back Pain during Pregnancy: 7 Tips for Relief [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/pregnancy-week-by-week/in-depth/pregnancy/art-20046080?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/healthy-lifestyle/pregnancy-week-by-week/in-depth/pregnancy/art-20046080?p=1>]

Patient Handouts

- Back pain - returning to work [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000517.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000517.htm>]
- Back pain - when you see the doctor [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007494.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007494.htm>]
- Back pain and sports [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000519.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000519.htm>]
- Chiropractic care for back pain [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000416.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000416.htm>]

Cognitive behavioral therapy for back pain [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000415.htm>]

(Medical Encyclopedia)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000415.htm>]

- Low back pain - acute [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007425.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007425.htm>]
- Low back pain - chronic [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007422.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007422.htm>]
- MRI and low back pain [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007493.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007493.htm>]
- Sacroiliac joint pain - aftercare [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000610.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000610.htm>]
- Taking care of your back at home [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002119.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002119.htm>]
- Taking narcotics for back pain [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000413.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000413.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Back pain - returning to work [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000517.htm>]

Back pain - when you see the doctor [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007494.htm>]

Back pain and sports [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000519.htm>]

Chiropractic care for back pain [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000416.htm>]

Cognitive behavioral therapy for back pain [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000415.htm>]

Diskitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000993.htm>]

Low back pain - acute [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007425.htm>]

Low back pain - chronic [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007422.htm>]

Lumbar MRI scan [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007352.htm>]

Lumbosacral spine x-ray [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003807.htm>]

MRI and low back pain [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007493.htm>]

Returning to sports after a back injury [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000518.htm>]

Sacroiliac joint pain - aftercare [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000610.htm>]

Spinal cord stimulation [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007560.htm>]

Taking care of your back at home [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002119.htm>]

Taking narcotics for back pain [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000413.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Back Injuries [<https://medlineplus.gov/backinjuries.html>]

Guide to Good Posture [<https://medlineplus.gov/guidetogoodposture.html>]

Herniated Disk [<https://medlineplus.gov/herniateddisk.html>]

Pain [<https://medlineplus.gov/pain.html>]

Sciatica [<https://medlineplus.gov/sciatica.html>]

Spinal Stenosis [<https://medlineplus.gov/spinalstenosis.html>]

Spine Injuries and Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/spineinjuriesanddisorders.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Back Pain* is the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases [<http://www.niams.nih.gov/>]

Other Languages

Find health information in languages other than English [<https://medlineplus.gov/languages/backpain.html>] on *Back Pain*

NIH MedlinePlus Magazine

6 Exercises You Can Do in Your Office [<https://magazine.medlineplus.gov/article/6-exercises-you-can-do-in-your-office>]

Biking, Pilates, and Yoga: How One Woman Stays Active [<https://magazine.medlineplus.gov/article/biking-pilates-and-yoga-how-one-woman-stays-active>]

How to Manage Low Back Pain Before it Gets Worse [<https://magazine.medlineplus.gov/article/how-to-manage-low-back-pain-before-it-gets-worse>]

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