**Sayer Clinics Back Pain Advice**

Following any period of prolonged inactivity, gradually start regular low-impact exercise.

Walking, swimming, or cycling 30 minutes a day will increase muscle strength and flexibility. Pilates Yoga and Tai Chi can also help stretch and strengthen muscles and improve posture.

Ask your chiropractor for a list of low-impact exercises designed to strengthen lower back and abdominal muscles.

Don’t slouch when standing or sitting. When standing, keep your weight balanced on your feet without most of your weight on your heels. Your back supports weight best when spinal curvatures are reduced.

Sit in a chair slightly tilted forwards with your knees below your hips and your feet under the chair.
Keep your chest up and don’t poke your head forward.
Your computer screen should be positioned so the middle of the screen is level with your eyes.

Change sitting positions often and spend most of every hour on your feet or walking around the office to make phone calls or use your computer with your wireless keyboard raised on a shelf or box - gently stretch to relieve tension. Wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes.

Sleep on your side or back to reduce excessive twisting in your spine. Ideally sleep on a fairly firm mattress with a soft 'sleeper' surface layer.

Don’t try to lift objects too heavy for you. Lift with your knees bent, pull in your stomach muscles, and keep your head down and in line with your straight back. Keep the object close to your body. Do not twist your spine when lifting.

Maintain proper nutrition and diet to reduce and prevent excessive weight which puts a chronic strain on lower back discs and muscles.

A good diet without processed food and with sufficient daily intake of calcium, phosphorus, and vitamin D3 helps to promote new bone growth.

If you smoke, stop. Smoking reduces blood flow to the spine and worsens spinal disc degeneration.

There has been limited large-scale, clinical research into the physical treatment of sciatica and limited evidence of the efficacy or otherwise of manual and acupuncture treatment for this condition. See The Bronfort Report. We either achieve brilliant results for our patients or refer for MRI and neurosurgery when necessary.

Book with our Expert Chiropractors for a full consultation, assessment, and a specialist treatment plan and advice.

**Treatment**

**Back Pain Diagnosis at Sayer Clinics**

Our Chiropractors and massage therapists take a thorough medical history and perform a physical examination to identify any conditions or family history that may be associated with the pain.

We thoroughly examine the spine and conduct neurological and orthopaedic tests to diagnose the cause of pain and enable us to provide effective treatment and intelligent advice. Blood tests and digital x-ray, MRI or CT imaging may be necessary to diagnose the source of the pain. We make specific referrals to medical specialists when indicated.

Spinal x-rays taken standing help diagnose the cause and location of back pain and look for broken bones or an injured vertebra and show bony structure and any disc narrowing , osteoarthritis , joint degeneration or vertebral misalignment.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). We can, without delay, refer patients for private MRI of the spine or joints to help diagnosis of disc prolapse or disease in nerves, muscles, ligaments or blood vessels.

**Chiropractic and massage treatment at Sayer Clinics**

Sayer Clinics aims to remobilise displaced or locked vertebrae, reducing inflammation, restoring proper function and strength to the back and preventing recurrence of the injury through postural rehabilitation.

Back pain may be referred to the hip, groin, buttocks, the leg and even into the foot as ‘sciatic’ pain.

The main causes of low back pain are muscular weakness and postural strain due to being overweight, sitting too much, lack of exercise, unequal leg-length, trauma or over-exercise. Sometimes the cushion between the bones (intervertebral disc) bulges (herniates) and compresses nearby nerves.

Ice (the use of cold compresses) can help reduce pain and inflammation and allow greater mobility. As soon as possible following trauma, you should apply a cold pack or a cold compress (such as a bag of ice or bag of frozen vegetables wrapped in a towel) to the tender spot several times a day for up to 20 minutes.

Bed rest for more than a day or so following onset of low back pain may prolong symptoms and can lead to secondary problems such as decreased muscle tone. You should resume activities as soon as possible. At night or during rest, you should lie on one side, with a pillow between your knees or lie on your back and put a pillow under your knees).

Exercise at the right point in your recovery, is the best way to speed recovery from low back pain and help strengthen core back and abdominal muscles. Maintaining and building muscle strength is particularly important for persons with skeletal irregularities. Our chiropractors, osteopaths and physical therapists provide a list of gentle exercises which help keep muscles and joints moving and speed the recovery process. A routine of back-healthy activities may include stretching exercises, swimming, walking or movement therapy to improve coordination and develop proper posture and muscle balance. Pilates Yoga and Tai Chi are excellent means to gently stretch and strengthen muscles and ease pain.

Medications are often used to treat acute and chronic low back pain. NSAIDs -Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs e.g. ibuprofen are unsafe during pregnancy and can cause side effects including drowsiness or stomach irritation with prolonged use. Opioids such as codeine, oxycodone, hydrocodone and morphine, if medically prescribed to manage severe, acute and chronic back pain produce side effects of drowsiness, decreased reaction time, impaired judgment and potential for addiction. Avoid steroid injections which temporarily lessen pain but prevents pain feedback, inhibits tissue healing and may cause permanent tissue weakness and damage.

Spinal manipulation is a safe “hands-on” approach in which professionally registered chiropractors and osteopaths use specific spinal manipulation and a series of exercises to mobilise spinal structures, restore back mobility and function and gradually rehabilitate posture.

Japanese and medical acupuncture involves the insertion of very fine needles at precise points throughout the body to trigger the release of naturally occurring opioid molecules and stimulate the brain to stimulate healing.

Massage and physical therapy (Laser, Ultrasound and Electrotherapy) are therapeutic for muscle, tendon and ligament damage or injury.