



Fact Sheet:

General Advice for Back Pain Suffers

Back Pain has three phases:

1. **Acute Inflammation**
Characterized by muscle spasm, stiffness, agonizing pain on movement.
2. **Sub-acute inflammation**
Improved movement with low back stiffness, a dull aching pain, with occasional sharp stabs on movement.
3. **Resolution**
Pain has disappeared but there is still stiffness and some of the underlying restrictions which caused the problem remain.

Stage One:

- Try applying Hot and Cold alternately to the effected area (see **Hot and Cold** Fact Sheet).
- Make sure that if you are able to take pain killers or anti-inflammatories that you are taking them at regular intervals to keep the levels in your body topped-up. Try to take them with food. Never exceed the maximum dose. For more information consult your local Pharmacist or Doctor.
- Although you maybe able to find a comfortable position which is relatively pain free, if your back is inflamed it will usually 'set' in this position and be a lot harder to move when you try. Avoid sitting in one position for longer than twenty minutes, particularly in soft chairs.
- Try to get up every few minutes and walk around the house.
- Try to coax your back into releasing with gentle rocking movements either standing or lying on the floor.
- Remember that for most people the worst period of pain usually lasts for a day after which the pain is markedly reduced.
- Bear in mind that a back in spasm can cause very severe pain but this does not always indicate that you have caused any long-term damage to you back. Most people make a rapid and full recovery.

In Stage Two

You should increase the general level of exercise with controlled movement such as walking, swimming or gentle cycling. Activities including washing up, getting out of chairs and sitting for long periods may still cause pain.

Stage Three

In this phase you may not be aware of any pain but your body will still feel stiffer than usual, and the pattern of trauma will still be held within your body.

Visiting your Osteopath in any of these phases will help to speed your movement to the next level and give you the best individual advice for managing your condition.

(N.B. If you experience numbness around your bottom associated with the complete inability to empty your bladder then you should go to the hospital immediately.)