

Back Health Myths and Facts



Back pain is very common, and so are the myths about what can lead to pain and how best to treat it. Because there are multiple causes of back pain, as well as multiple types (for instance, a sharp stabbing sensation is very different from a dull, unrelenting ache), it's important to know the facts, and talk to your doctor about your symptoms.

Myth: Exercise can hurt your back.

Fact: Exercise strengthens the muscles that support and stabilize your spine. A health care professional can show you exercises that can relieve symptoms of back conditions such as bulged discs or sciatica.

Myth: The best thing for a sore back is bed rest.

Fact: If you have chronic back pain, gentle exercise, such as walking or stretching, may be able to help. For a sudden injury, some rest can help. However, spending a day or two in bed can actually make pain worse.

Myth: Never lift heavy things.

Fact: How you lift a heavy object matters more than how much it weighs. Here's how to do it: Squat close to the object. Keep your back straight and head forward. Push up with your legs while holding the item toward the middle of your body and avoid twisting or bending. If the item is too heavy to lift comfortably, have someone help you.

Myth: Always sit up straight.

Fact: When you're sitting, yes, sit up straight. But the key to good back health is not to spend all your time sitting. If you're sitting at a desk all day, break up your time with some stretches, and even stand for a while if you can.

Myth: All back pain is caused by injury.

Fact: Some back pain is caused by injury, but it can also be caused by disease, infection, an inherited condition or disc degeneration. That is why it's important to be properly diagnosed by a medical professional.

Myth: Spine surgeons always recommend surgery.

Fact: The vast majority of back problems can be resolved without surgery, and even most surgeons reserve recommending spine surgery for people who have already exhausted other less-invasive options.

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Source: WebMD®

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