



Many people suffer back pain at some time in their lives. Whether your back pain has just started or is a constant problem, physiotherapy can help.

# Treatment for *Back Pain*

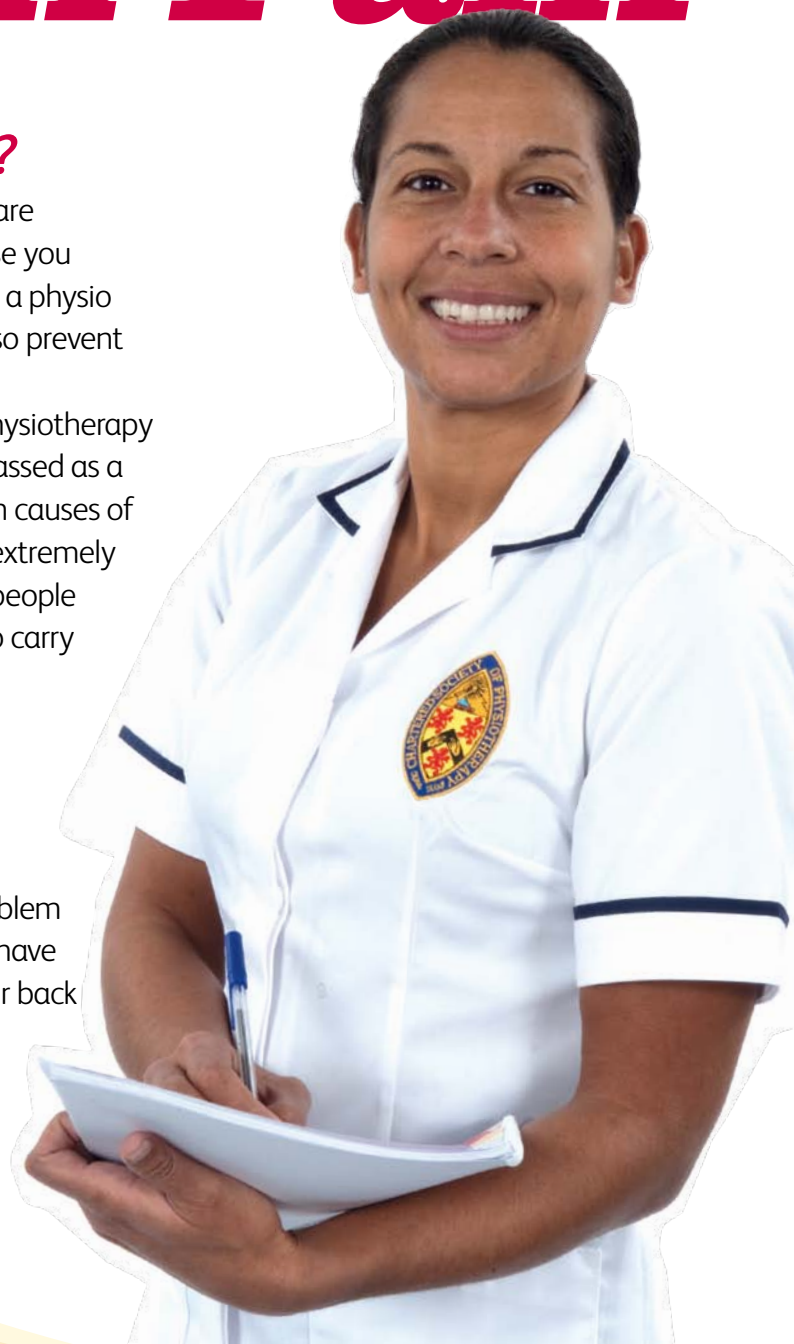
## *How can physiotherapy help?*

Physiotherapists offer a range of treatments that are effective with back pain. Your physio will also advise you on appropriate exercise and pain relief. If you see a physio quickly, this can not only speed up recovery but also prevent the problem happening again.

Clinical studies and research have shown that physiotherapy works well for managing back pain. Back pain is classed as a 'musculoskeletal disorder' (MSD), one of the main causes of people being off sick from work. Physiotherapy is extremely effective with MSDs. In one study, 80 per cent of people who had physiotherapy for their MSD were able to carry on working and did not have to go off sick.

## *What happens when I see a physiotherapist?*

When you see a physio, they will assess your problem and give you advice. They will check out if you have a serious health problem connected to your back pain. They will then look at the reason for your back pain and ways to prevent further problems.



Everything you tell the physio will be completely confidential.

They may give you a physical treatment. So that your physio can have a good look at your back and possibly feel your spine, they may need you to remove some clothes. It's a good idea to dress comfortably and wear suitable underwear.

## Find a physio

Physios are the third largest health profession after doctors and nurses. They work in the NHS, in private practice, for charities and in the work-place, through occupational health schemes.

Ask your GP for a referral to an NHS physio or find a private physio at [www.csp.org.uk/your-health/find-physio/access-options](http://www.csp.org.uk/your-health/find-physio/access-options)

## How can I help myself?

There is a lot you can do to help yourself. Continuing with your usual work and activities, as much as possible, can help your back pain. Exercises can reduce your back pain and help to prevent it returning. The right sort of exercise, as advised by a physio, can make a big difference.

Research has shown lower back pain may return if it is ignored. Lifestyle changes, such as being more active and improving your posture, are important. See our free exercise leaflets [www.csp.org.uk/publications/common-pains-conditions](http://www.csp.org.uk/publications/common-pains-conditions)

## What causes back pain?

Back pain has a wide variety of causes, from trying to pick up a heavy parcel incorrectly to spending too long sitting in one position. If you are feeling very anxious or stressed this can make your pain worse.

Back pain is very rarely caused by serious health conditions. Most people recover quickly from their back pain, if it is managed properly.

## Top tips

- Exercise and activity are the most important ways of helping yourself
- Keep moving and continue with activities such as walking or swimming
- Take paracetamol or similar pain-killers as advised by your GP or physio
- Avoid sitting for too long
- Gently stretch to prevent stiffness
- Bend your hips and knees when lifting
- Check your posture when using computers/games or watching television
- Don't smoke – it is bad for your circulation and your recovery
- Strengthen your trunk muscles to protect your back
- Make sure your car seat, office chair and bed mattress support your back properly
- Avoid being overweight which can be a cause of back pain.

## Further information

**NHS Choices:** comprehensive information on back pain  
[www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Backpain/Pages/Topbacktips.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Backpain/Pages/Topbacktips.aspx)

**Arthritis Research UK**  
<http://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/arthritis-information/conditions/back-pain.aspx>

**Backcare:** UK charity: [www.backcare.org.uk](http://www.backcare.org.uk)  
Helpline: 0845 130 2704

**NICE** (England and Wales): information for patients [www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/11887/44346/44346.pdf](http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/11887/44346/44346.pdf)



CHARTERED  
SOCIETY  
OF  
PHYSIOTHERAPY

Web: [www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk)

Tel: 0207 306 6666

Email: [enquiries@csp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@csp.org.uk)

### Disclaimer

The content on this page is provided for general information purposes only and is not meant to replace a physiotherapy or medical consultation. The CSP is not responsible for the content of any external sites, nor should selection be seen as an endorsement of them.