

Acute Low Back Pain

Simple steps to help.....

1. The key is not to panic. You may well become acute for at least 3 days
2. Take adequate pain control. You may need to see the GP for prescription medication in the initial stages if over the counter remedies do not help
3. Relative rest is required preferably in lying to off-load your back
4. Avoid sitting for long periods (10-15 mins only)
5. Regular gentle movement is important
6. Ice therapy can be beneficial or local application of Biofreeze Gel
7. After 48 hours heat therapy with a wheat pack may well help to decrease muscle spasm
8. Use of a TNS machine is also a consideration for pain control

Most back pain settles with time (6-8 weeks). We aim where possible to see people within 48 hours to ensure no warning signs 'red flags' are present as this could indicate a serious problem that requires a Consultant opinion.

Symptoms that need urgent medical attention include:

- Numbness, pins and needles, tingling, abnormal sensation around the anus, buttock, between the thighs, scrotum or penis,
- Change in bladder habits including poor stream, worse, difficulty to start or emptying, dribbling, sense of incomplete emptying of bladder and problem with bowels.
- Referred diffuse pain, funny feelings or heaviness in the legs
- Escalating pain which is poorly responsive to treatment (including medication)
- Agonising pain causing anguish and despair
- Walking disturbance, unsteadiness, especially on stairs (not just a limp)
- Sleep grossly disturbed due to pain being worse at night
- Lying flat on your back increases the pain

Please take immediate advice from a doctor if you develop any of the above symptoms, **don't** wait for your next physiotherapy review.

Make sure you tell your physiotherapist if you've had any worrying symptoms at physiotherapy consultations, do not be embarrassed, we need to know, so we can give the appropriate advice.

The above list is not wholly exhaustive but is provided to ensure patients have received strong guidance. Further information about back conditions can be gained from www.eurospine.org or www.mkspine.co.uk.

Leyland physiotherapy does not accept any responsibility for the use of this information.