



Health Advice

A healthy back

Almost everyone is familiar with back pain; it is one of the most common complaints. The good news: most of the time it is harmless and there is a lot we can do to alleviate the pain or prevent it from occurring in the first place by making small changes in our everyday lives and performing a few targeted exercises. There are many different causes of back pain. A lack of exercise or one-sided movements in everyday life is often the reason, but draughts, stress or unhappiness can also manifest themselves in back pain. Irrespective of what triggers your back pain, you can play a role in your back health.

How to sit properly

The magic word is “dynamic sitting”. What does this term mean? Spending too much time sitting does not necessarily cause back problems, but if you stay in the same position for too long, you risk painful tension. That is why you should change your sitting position as often as possible, move around, lean backwards, stand up from time to time - this relieves muscles and joints. Ergonomic office chairs and height-adjustable desks can also help. Stand up to use the telephone, walk a few steps regularly - any movement at the workplace is good for your back.

Take exercise

Incorporate more exercise into your daily routine whenever you can. Take the stairs instead of the lift, use your bike instead of the car for shorter distances, put the printer at the other end of the room so you have to stand up. No matter how and where you move - do it! It doesn't have to be a sports session, gentle exercise is just as effective.

Five small back exercises for the workplace:

These small exercises that can be performed periodically or during your lunch break prevent back pain and can relieve discomfort. Repeat the exercises only as often as you can do them without feeling pain.

1. In an upright sitting position, turn your head back and forth, tilt it sideways and forwards
2. Stretch your arms upwards one at a time, as if you were picking fruit from a tree
3. Let your arms hang loosely and gently move your shoulders forwards and backwards in a circular motion
4. Lock your fingers tightly in front of your chest, then forcefully pull your hands apart
5. Go for a short walk during your lunch break and, if possible, take in views of the countryside

Relax

Stress can cause back pain; it is not without reason that we talk about being "tense". This is meant quite literally, because when we are stressed we pull our shoulders up, clench our fists, and tense up our entire posture. This causes the muscles to tense up and hurt. You can therefore strengthen your back with targeted relaxation exercises such as meditation or progressive muscle relaxation.

Carry and lift objects correctly

If you move a lot in your job anyway, for example as a tradesperson, in your work in care or in production, you should take care not to strain yourself one-sidedly and, above all, to lift and carry objects correctly. When lifting, bend your knees and keep your back straight. When carrying, keep the weight centred and do not turn your upper body under load. Good abdominal and back muscles are important. Strengthen your core with targeted strengthening exercises. This will help your body cope better with loads or awkward postures.

When should I see a doctor about back pain?

It is not always necessary to see a doctor about back pain. Targeted exercises and relaxation techniques can help, depending on the cause of the pain. However, you should make an appointment with a doctor if the pain is new or very sudden, if it lasts longer than six weeks, gets worse or whenever you feel unsure.