­­Week 1

# Subject: *Beating back pain*: Protecting your back from injury

Welcome to our *Beating back pain* campaign. Your back is strong in many ways, but susceptible to injury in others. Back pain is the most common cause of time off work (1), with around 10 million people in the UK living with the condition (2). That’s why we want to share information on the steps you can take to protect your back.

What does low back pain feel like? It may be a constant, uncomfortable ache or a sudden, sharp pain. It may gradually disappear or feel worse over time. You may not even be aware that you’ve hurt your back then, suddenly, you’re in pain.

Back injuries can be difficult to diagnose and treat. Although back pain often resolves within six weeks or so, recovery can take longer. That’s why it’s important to do everything you can to protect your back.

Here are a few simple changes you can make to help protect your back:

* Move more. Even 10 seconds of movement and stretching is better than sitting still.
* Maintain a healthy weight and eat a nutritious diet.
* Avoid sleeping on your stomach. Sleeping on your side with your knees drawn up in a foetal position can help open up the joints in the spine and relieve pressure by reducing the curvature of the spine.
* Stand with your weight equally distributed on both of your feet.
* Don’t try to lift objects that are too heavy. Squat down with your feet shoulder-width apart and your back straight so you can lift with your legs rather than your back. Keep objects close to the body and avoid twisting as you lift.
* Stretch. In particular, stretching your hamstrings can provide relief across your lower back.
* Don’t wear worn out shoes or flip flops. Wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes.

Watch for more information about preventing lower back pain.

1. [University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust | Back pain prevention (uhb.nhs.uk)](https://hgs.uhb.nhs.uk/back-pain-prevention/)
2. [The State of Musculoskeletal Health 2021 (versusarthritis.org)](https://www.versusarthritis.org/about-arthritis/data-and-statistics/state-of-musculoskeletal-health-2019/#:~:text=Around%208.5%20million%20people%20have%20osteoarthritis%20in%20the,2.8%20million%20people%20have%20fibromyalgia%20in%20the%20UK.)

Week 2

# Subject: *Beating back pain*: Ouch! What’s causing my back pain?

Last week we launched the *Beating back pain* campaign. Our goal is to provide useful information that may keep you from suffering back problems. We’ll also share some of the latest treatment options from the medical community.

It may seem strange, but the origins of back pain can be difficult to diagnose. Here are some examples of origins of back pain, some of which may surprise you:

* Wearing certain shoes such as stilettos, flip-flops or overly-worn shoes
* Constantly feeling stressed and tense
* Spending too much time bent over a smartphone or tablet.
* Sleeping on your stomach

Don’t risk an incapacitating injury if you can take steps to protect your back. We’ve got the lowdown on preventing lower back pain.

**Week 3**

# Subject: Back pain treatment myths

You have an ache in your lower back. You try to ignore it, hoping it will go away. But it’s getting worse. What should you do?

There are many common misconceptions about how to treat lower back pain. Here are some of them:

## Stay in bed

You may have been told that lying down is the best way to soothe an aching back, but in most cases, moving is actually better for your back.

## Surgery is your best bet

Surgery is not always the best treatment for alleviating back pain. It is often unjustifiable and may only provide temporary relief. It may be necessary but it will usually be a last resort after all the other options have been exhausted.

## Fight through the pain

Don’t ignore or try to fight through the pain. Lower back pain can start out as a minor problem, but it can become chronic over time. A chronic condition is persistent or recurring and can be difficult to treat. It’s also possible that lower back pain might be a symptom of an underlying medical condition, such as kidney stones. Know when you need to ask for medical help.

Watch for more information about preventing lower back pain in our *Beating back pain* awareness campaign.