**Acute Low Back Pain**

**Frequently Asked Questions**



**Question: What is ‘Acute Low Back Pain’?**

Acute low back pain is pain felt in the lower back that lasts for a short time (i.e. less than three months). Most people have pain in their low back at some stage in their lives. In most cases, it will get better in several weeks; however, this varies from person to person. Acute low back pain may happen again over time.

**Question: What causes ‘Acute Low Back Pain’?**

In around 95% of cases it is not possible to pinpoint the cause of the pain. However, it is not necessary to know the specific cause in order to manage the pain effectively. It is rare for the pain to be caused by a serious medical problem..

**Question: What should I do when I have ‘Acute Low Back Pain’?**

If your pain bothers you, it is important to see your physiotherapist, to work with them to manage your pain, and to stay active.

A history and a physical examination are needed to assess for any serious medical conditions that may be associated with your pain, although these are rare.

Your physiotherapist can provide you with information about your pain once they have assessed you. Ask for an explanation if unfamiliar terms are used. Sometimes a diagram can be useful.

Additional investigations, such as X-rays and blood tests, are not needed in the majority of cases of acute low back pain. The do not help with your pain or your ability to move your back.

It is normal to worry about the cause of your pain and the impact it may have on you. Talking to your physiotherapist about your concerns can be very helpful. You will usually find there is no serious cause and that there are ways to relieve your symptoms.

**Stay active with back pain. So, what does ‘staying active’ really mean?**

Keeping your back moving stops the working parts in your back from seizing up. It may hurt at first, but continuing to move rarely increases any damage – hurt is not the same as harm. Always ask your physiotherapist what type of exercises you should be doing, because you’ll get back to normal a lot quicker.

The exercises and the direction you move your back might be different for different people because there may be subtle differences to each problem. This is why you must ask your physiotherapist what exercises are **best for you.**

**Strike a balance**

Of course, you may need to take it a little easier or move a bit more carefully at first. But don’t stop altogether. You can still do most normal activities without putting too much strain on your back – just use common sense!

**What about work?**

Some tasks may be more difficult when your back is sore, but back pain is not usually caused by work. Work is good for physical but especially mental health. So staying active and getting on with your life means staying at work or returning to work as soon as possible. You don’t have to wait till the pain is 100% gone. In fact, if you do it sensibly, getting back to work can help you recover faster. And don’t be afraid to ask colleagues for help if you need to.

**Get on with your life**

You know that activity is good for your health – it’s just the same for your back. The most important thing is for you to get on with your life. You can really help yourself.

**Tips**

1. Don’t sit or stand in one position for too long – change position often.
2. Get up and walk about to avoid stiffening up.
3. Take breaks when driving.
4. Some things may take a little longer or you may need to change how you do them.
5. Seek relief and education from your physiotherapist
6. Walking and swimming are good forms of regular exercise for your back.

Please feel free to [ask us](http://www.baroonaphysio.com.au/contact-pg5662.html) any questions about this topic. We are only too happy to help.

**Important:** All information provided is the general opinion of a highly qualified and experienced musculoskeletal and sports physiotherapist. Individual conditions vary and advice regarding your **specific** condition requires consultation with a registered physiotherapist.