

## **Keep on moving: tips on exercise**

When you have back pain it is crucial for you to keep moving. Movement is something that you can do that contributes to your back getting better. Part of the process of the back getting better is allowing time for the body's natural healing to occur - this will be much better if you continue to move, even if this causes some discomfort it does not cause harm. Remember, the spine is designed to move.

### **Movement, exercises and activity**

- Avoids stiffness developing in the back.
- Prevents your muscles becoming weak.
- Maintains your tolerance to movement.
- Gives you confidence and prevents anxiety about movement.

### **What harm can result from movement, exercise and activity?**

- None - as long as you follow the advice below
- You may experience some discomfort during movement, but the longer term outcome will be better for movement.

### **So what should I do?**

The following advice is general and not specific to anybody's particular back pain. Try and do at least one of the following activities, they will not damage your spine. You may experience some discomfort after doing the activity - this should settle down soon afterwards, If you are very uncomfortable after, it may be a sign you have done too much.

However you should not stop moving, just go a little more gently and build up gradually, alternatively you might need stronger painkillers to help you to keep moving.

1. For pain relief, try lying down on your back with both of your knees bent up. This is called 'crook lying'.



2. Walking. Try to walk (even when it hurts) every hour. You might only manage to walk from one room to the next, this will help you recover. If you are able, try to walk a little further and try to increase the distance a little each day
3. Stand up straight and gently bend backwards from the hips. If it is more comfortable support your lower back with your hands. Lean backwards repeat about 5-6 times. Try and do this every 2 hours. This movement is called 'extension'. This may be mildly uncomfortable but not painful, if you experience pain in your lower back or legs then stop doing this exercise.



4. In sitting position, shuffle forwards in your chair, rest your hands on your lap, sit up tall - pushing your hips forward (fig.1) and then slump down as far as you can. Do this slowly about 6 times and repeat every 2 hours. This movement is called 'pelvic tilting'.



You may find that if you see a physiotherapist you will be given additional exercises or movements to perform depending on the specific nature of your back pain. This is fine, the advice above is general and appropriate for the vast majority of back pain.

### Useful Links

- [Leisure services in Sheffield](#)
- [Parks, woodlands and countryside in Sheffield](#)
- [Ramblers Association](#)
- [Zest Community](#)