



Tips for Managing Low Back Pain

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are common in the workplace. Globally, it has been estimated that 1 in 10 people suffer from low back pain, which is the leading³ cause of disability worldwide.

Those at higher risk for low back pain share some common characteristics:

- Over age 30
- Sedentary lifestyle⁴
- Smoking
- Overweight
- Repetitive movements

Low back pain is often caused by sudden injuries, like a fall or not using good form when lifting heavy objects. Some injuries, however, occur more slowly over time.

If you experience a new episode of back pain, it is always a good idea to have it evaluated by a medical professional first, but **here are some simple self-care tips to help reduce your risks:**

Take micro breaks. Taking short breaks frequently can help reduce muscle tightness. Increasing physical activity, even when they are short bouts, has been shown to be one of the most effective ways to alleviate low back pain.

Stretch. Stretching can help relieve muscle tension and pain. Massages, yoga, and foam rolling are a few examples.

Avoid bending forward. Do your best to avoid bending forward while sitting at your desk. This can overextend your spine and strain your back. Aim to keep your back straight with your head centered on top of it.



Alternate between sitting and standing. Avoid staying in one position for long periods of time. Adjustable standing desks can make it easier to move between sitting and standing positions without disrupting your work.

Seek medical care. Because low back pain is so elusive, it is best to see your doctor if pain persists despite your best efforts to self-manage it. There may be underlying medical issues that need attention, and addressing it early can prevent further complications and injuries.

To manage low back pain, focus on preventive strategies like minimizing repetitive movements, taking periodic breaks throughout the day, and increasing your level of physical activity.

3. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)30480-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)30480-X)

4. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apergo.2019.102894>