

# Bulimba



Brought to you by John Perrier, Simon Rundell & Janette Hiatt

## The Back Pain Issue...

- Major causes of back pain
- Recognising situations that stress your back
- Hints to modify stress situations

## Our contact details...

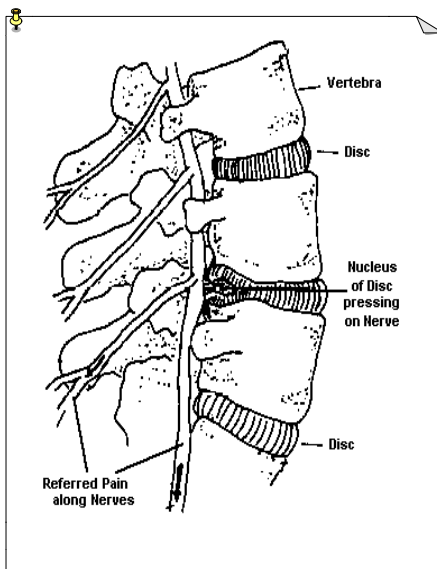
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**B**ACK PAIN !  
It can be one of the most painful and frustrating conditions that you can suffer. Yet despite the fact that over 85% of people have back pain at some time during their lives, very few people understand what causes it. Even fewer people know how to prevent it.



Back pain can arise from any of the structures in the spine, including the discs, joints, ligaments, muscles and nerves. The whole area is very complex, and often the pain comes from two or more related structures. Here are some common examples of what can go wrong:

### Disc Injury

The discs separating your vertebrae (the bones). They have a

jelly-like centre surrounded by fibrous, leathery rings. Stress on the back can cause the outer layers to be damaged or weakened, meaning that the central jelly can bulge or rupture.

### Nerve Involvement

The nerves of your hips and legs run down your spine, very close to your disc and joints. Injury to any of these structures can therefore put pressure on the nerves.

### Osteoarthritis

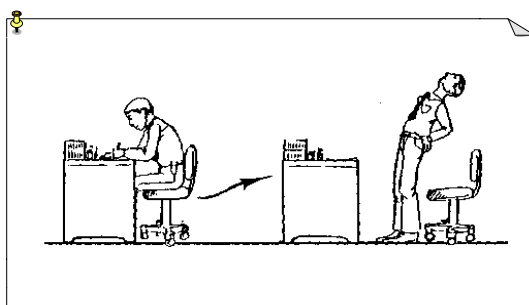
Osteoarthritis is a *not a disease*. It is simply a term used to describe wear-and-tear. It is not necessarily permanent, and usually can be helped. When referring to arthritis in the spine, the diagnosis simply means that you have wear-and-tear in your discs or joints.

### Muscle Injury

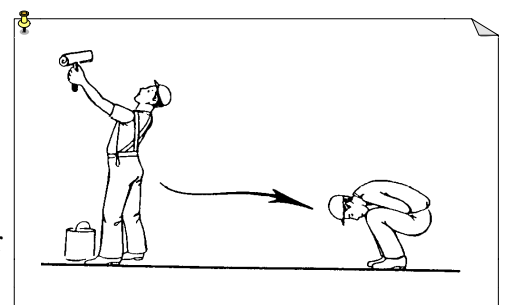
Like all muscles the muscles of the back may be torn or bruised. More commonly though, pain is felt in the back muscles because they go into spasm as a secondary response to an injury.

As you can see your back pain may arise from many sources. It takes a trained professional to accurately diagnose the source of your pain.

If you spend a lot of your day sitting or lifting, stretch your back every 30 mins, this way!

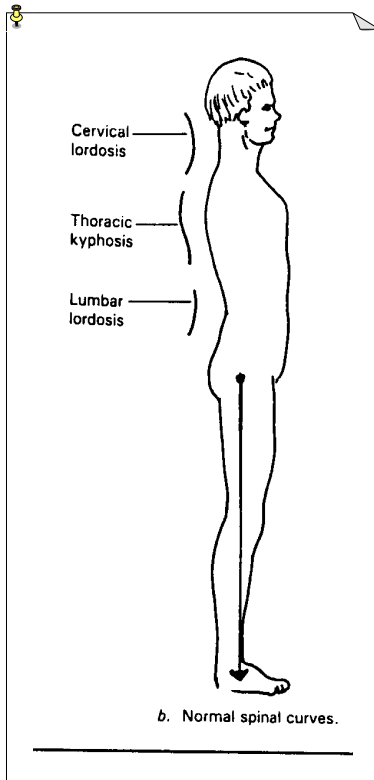


If you spend much of your day standing or stretching upwards, then curling into a ball works in a similar way!



## “Stress Situations”

**S**ituations that change the natural curve of your spine put greater levels of stress on your back.



In a normal standing posture, the side view of the back shows that there is an inward curve in the small of the back, just above the pelvis. This hollow in the low back is called the lumbar *lordosis*.

The lordosis is the natural position of the spine. Provided this curve is not exaggerated, it is the position where the back structures are in their most protected state.

When you lose this lordosis, such as when you bend forwards, or sit in a slouched position, you

place extra stress on your back.

Poor sitting posture is a common cause of back pain for this reason. Often when we sit, at work, at home and in the car, we slouch, causing an increase in the pressure on our discs.

Lifting, particularly if heavy or repeated, also places your back under stress. One bad lift may be all that is required to injure your back

The discs in the low back are composed of a jelly-like core surrounded by a fibrous ring. Lifting incorrectly, with the spine bent forwards, causes the fluid to be pushed backwards. If the pressure is great enough the fibrous ring may tear or rupture.

Sustained postures are another common cause of back pain. Even if your back is healthy, it may ache if it is held in the same position for too long. A simple rule to avoid building up too much postural strain is to change your position regularly. Stretch your back every thirty minutes or so.

Our Physios can not only help with the pain, but can teach you ways to avoid it happening again.

## “Avoiding Pain”

**T**here are an infinite number of jobs, tasks and activities that are stressful to your lumbar spine. Just remember the three major principles of back care;

- Maintain your lordosis, whether sitting or during activity
- Lift correctly, and
- Avoid sustained postures.

Below are some examples of how to modify tasks for better back care.

- ♦ Use long handled tools and appliances. This will allow you to stand as upright as possible when doing tasks such as vacuuming or raking.
- ♦ Go down on one knee for tasks at ground level like weeding or digging.
- ♦ Mow across hill rather than up and down.
- ♦ Shovel in small loads. Don't twist your back - instead step around, or pivot on your feet.
- ♦ Bend your knees when picking up a wheelbarrow. Have the load well forward over the wheel.
- ♦ Stack objects near the back edge of the car boot,

rather than leaning over to place and retrieve them from the centre.

- ♦ Ensure the washing line is at a suitable height to avoid repetitive high reaching. Always use a trolley.

- ♦ Put a foot rest - a telephone book, for example - under the ironing board or work bench.

Alternate your feet on it every few minutes or so.

- ♦ Open the kitchen cupboard under the sink or bench and use the bottom shelf as a foot rest.

- ♦ In the kitchen or workshop, store heavy or frequently used items at waist height.



What other activities give you back pain. How could you modify them?