

‘Towards a healthy strong back’



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Date of publication: 5.4.24

Back pain is a common problem.

According to WHO 19.6.2023

Key facts

- In 2020, low back pain (LBP) affected 619 million people globally and it is estimated that the number of cases will increase to 843 million cases by 2050, driven largely by population expansion and ageing.
- LBP is the single leading cause of disability worldwide and the condition for which the greatest number of people may benefit from rehabilitation.
- LBP can be experienced at any age, and most people experience LBP at least once in their life.
- Prevalence increases with age up to 80 years, while the highest number of LBP cases occurs at the age of 50–55 years. LBP is more prevalent in women.
- Non-specific LBP is the most common presentation of LBP (about 90% of cases).

Prevention of back pain

- Avoid heavy lifting.
- Lift correctly when lifting something heavy. Bend your knees, keep your back straight.
- Aim for a healthy weight.
- Aim for good posture.
 - o Stand tall with your head and shoulders back
 - o Sit up straight with your back against the back of your chair and your feet flat on the floor. If possible, keep your knees slightly higher than your hips.
 - o Avoid sitting in the same position for too long
- Do muscle- strengthening and stretching exercises at least twice a week.

Different types of back pain:

Acute

- Lasts from a few days to a few weeks.
- Often caused by an accident, a fall, or lifting something heavy.
- Gets better on its own.
- May need to seek medical care.

Chronic

- Lasts for more than 3 months.

Risk factors:

- Poor posture
- Aren't physically fit
- Overweight
- Fall or accident
- Have a health problem like cancer or arthritis
- Smoker

Take action

Take care of yourself to avoid back pain.

Preventing back pain is easier than treating it.

Strengthen your back with physical activity

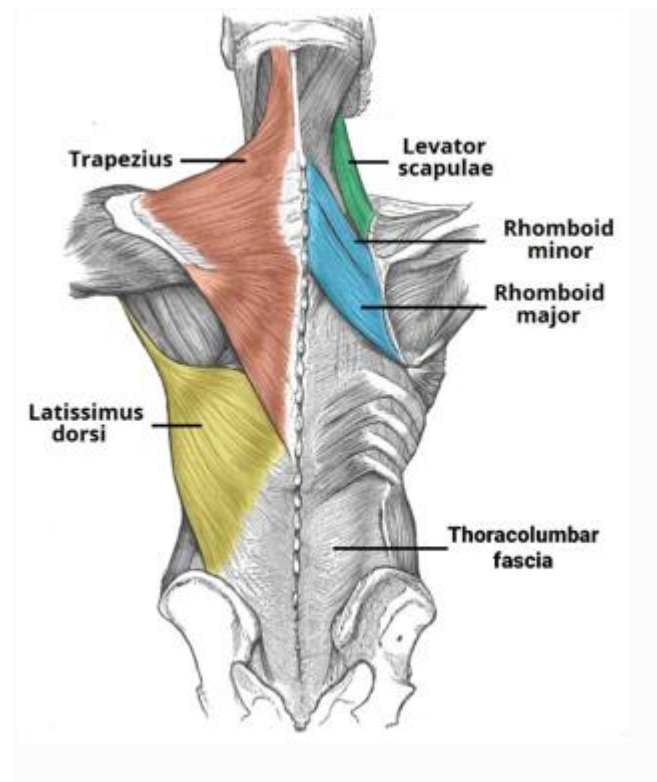
- Do muscle-strengthening and stretching exercises at least twice a week.
- Yoga and Pilates can help stretch and strengthen your muscles.
- Aim for at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise.

Get enough calcium and vitamin D

Ensuring strong bones and prevention of osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis makes your bones weaker and more likely to fracture. If it affects your spine, it can cause back pain.

Muscles of the back



The back is the biggest muscle group after legs.

Upper Back – Muscle Involved Rhomboids and Trapezius

Middle Backs – Lats (Latissimus Dorsi)

Lower Back – Thoracolumbar Fascia

The back is a big muscle group and the goal is to target it from different angles to train it effectively. Each exercise targets the back in a different way and you need to perform a variety of moves to develop every muscle fiber in your back.

The overall development of the back needs a combination of compound and isolation exercises.

Suggestions for back exercises:

Cobra back

COBRA BACK FOR A STRONGER AND LEANER BACK



Manu Padilla/Stocksy



A chiselled back called a cobra back for the V-taper looks like the head of a cobra when a bodybuilder spreads out his lats.

Deadlifts are a full body exercise and are essential to building a cobra back. Deadlifts are the mother of all back exercises.

The deadlift is a compound exercise that targets the muscles of the back, shoulders, and legs.

When performed correctly, it can improve posture while helping build strength and muscle mass. A person can modify the exercise to target different muscle groups, and it is appropriate for people of all fitness levels

Proper form

When performed correctly, the deadlift is a safe and effective exercise. However, an incorrect form can lead to injuries. Individuals must understand the correct technique before attempting this exercise.

A deadlift involves grasping a barbell while in a squatting position, then elevating it by extending the hips, knees, and ankles. When the hips are fully extended, the lifting portion of the movement has ended.

Proper form requires hips with a good range of motion and a stable back and core.

A person should aim to keep their back flat as they pick up the barbell and focus on pushing their hips back to perform the movement. The weight must be kept as close as possible to the body throughout the entire motion to decrease stress on the lower back.

Resistance band exercises for a stronger and leaner back



Resistance bands are a versatile way to strengthen your back muscles and combat work-from-home posture. These exercises, in combination with posture readjustments throughout the day, will make a difference in the way you look, but most importantly, in the way you feel.

Your muscles grow from two factors: tension and progressive overload, or the amount of resistance, and continuously increasing the resistance over time.

Bands can help you with both of these, and they provide a different type of resistance than free weights or machines. As you pull the band farther away or apart, resistance increases, which will cause you to use your muscle fibers differently.

Resistance bands are also easily portable, affordable, and versatile — three more benefits.

Types of resistance bands

- Bands with handles- rubber tubing with a handle on each end
- Superbands- large looped bands made of thick, heavy-duty rubber
- Mini bands, which are smaller, thinner looped bands

Different levels of resistance are available. You can adjust the resistance by doubling it up.

Let's look after our back health by starting to take appropriate action today!

'Towards better health outcomes'

Resources:

1. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/low-back-pain#:~:text=An%20estimated%20619%20million%20people,on%20individuals%20and%20on%20societies.>
2. US Department of Health and Human Services <https://health.gov/myhealthfinder/healthy-living/safety/prevent-back-pain#take-action-tab>
3. <https://generationiron.com/moves-to-build-a-cobra-back/>
4. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/what-muscles-does-deadlift-work#summary>
5. <https://www.healthline.com/health/fitness/back-exercises-with-bands#Exercises-to-combat-work-from-home-posture>

About the author:

Dr Chrystal Fong Chern Ying (MBBS Melbourne, FRACGP) is currently practicing as a family physician at Asia HealthPartners under the subsidiary of Singapore Institute of Advanced Medicine (SAM) Holdings, located at Lucky Plaza, Orchard, Singapore.

Dr Chrystal Fong is listed on the editors list of health screening providers on Health365, a healthcare, wellness and aesthetic medicine publishing agency in Asia. She has a special interest in health prevention and incorporates sports psychology and lifestyle medicine principles in her health screening and advocacy in health promotion.

She is an active sports person who has keen interests in lifestyle medicine, medical technology and longevity themed medical care. She takes personal pride in living the lifestyle medicine pillars herself and advocating through her sports communities and social media platforms.

Her personal mantra being 'The world is changed by your example, not your example'

She incorporates her consultations with health coaching methods and inspires behavioural change with sports psychology angles.

She is a member of the Society of Behavioural Health, Singapore and the College of Family Physicians, Sg. She is also a certified personal trainer.

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