



# How to End Back Pain and Stiffness

WITHOUT taking pain medication,  
surgery, or waiting to see your  
physician.

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## **How to End Back Pain and Stiffness.... WITHOUT taking pain medication, surgery, or waiting to see your physician.**

### **1. Use Ice and Heat Correctly:**

If you are having new symptoms or recently exacerbated an old injury - use ice for 10-15 minutes, 3-5 times daily for the first week. Another sign that it's the right time to use ice is the presence of swelling. Ice reduces blood flow to the area and can help alleviate swelling and inflammation; thus reducing pain.

If you feel stiff or it's a chronic injury use heat for 15-20 minutes, 1-3 times per day. Heat works well with chronic or old injuries because inflammation is normally less of an issue. Heat can increase blood flow, reduce muscle tension and reduce pain.

### **2. Avoid sitting for long periods of time**

Sitting puts a great deal of stress on the low back due to the position that most of us sit in and over time this can lead to pain and stiffness. You should try to change your position every 20 minutes to help reduce the stress on your back and you will feel less discomfort and stiffness.

### **3. Avoid repetitive bending and lifting**

Repetitive bending and lifting also puts a great deal of stress on your low back. Sometimes activities feel fine as you are doing them such as weeding the garden or shoveling snow and it isn't until later that your back lets you know you've done too much! The best way to avoid this is taking regular breaks to allow your back a chance to rest before continuing the activity. You should also try to keep your back as straight as possible and use your legs to do the heavy lifting!

### **4. Get Some Sleep**

Sleep is an essential function in the healing process. Simply put if you are not sleeping well then you are not healing well and your pain level can be increased. The best position is often the fetal position as the joints of the low back are in their optimal position. Adding a pillow between your knees also helps keep your spine in a neutral position and can reduce pain.

### **5. Wear Appropriate Footwear**

With some types of shoes, such as high heels, flip flops, sandals, shoes with poor cushioning, the amount of stress through the joints in our spine increases dramatically. Over time, this repeated stress and pressure can lead to a painful and tight lower back. Wearing shoes with proper cushioning will help absorb shock and prevent your lower back from taking an unnecessary load, which should help decrease your low back pain.

## **6. Keep Moving**

You hear it all the time but it's true! When you move it lubricates the joints in the spine, improves strength, and posture. Even if you're in pain you should try to remain active. An example would be taking short walks around the block or march on the spot while you brush your teeth. Get creative!

## **7. Perform Specific Back Exercises:**

Performing targeted exercises which have been prescribed after identifying your specific problem is key to reducing pain and stiffness, as well as preventing future episodes. It's hard to advise on general exercises or doing "google exercises" as they should always be given after fully understanding your unique problems.

## **8. See a Physiotherapist:**

Physiotherapy can ease back pain, reduce muscle tension and ease joint stiffness quickly and effectively. After a consultation with a good physiotherapist you will feel more confident and less worried about your back pain and feel relief from treatment.

## **Conclusion**

So there you have it! **8 things that you can do today to improve posture, general health, and alleviate back pain and stiffness.** Apply these fundamentals to your daily routine and it will make a difference in your quality of life.

I hope this is the beginning of a great, long-term relationship where myself and my team at Cabot Physiotherapy become the source of leading-edge health advice for you (and your family) and make a real difference to the quality and enjoyment of your life.

We love questions! So feel free to call us, or use our online forms to submit your questions.

Visit [www.cabotphysio.ca](http://www.cabotphysio.ca)

**Note:** Not all physiotherapists are the same, as some do not and will not provide you with the hands on type of treatment that you need to end pain as fast as you would hope. Disappointing, but true.