

How to Relieve Lower Back Pain Fast: The Ultimate 2025 Guide

By Laura Bublitz, RN-BC, CMSN, CCHP, CMCN, LNC Sp.
January 2025

What Causes Lower Back Pain?

Lower back pain (LBP) refers to pain or discomfort in the lower region of the back, extending from below the ribcage to the top of the legs. The cause can be related to several issues:

- **Mechanical issues:** Strains, sprains, or injuries to muscles, ligaments, or discs.
- **Degenerative conditions:** Arthritis, spinal stenosis, or degenerative disc disease.
- **Nerve-related issues:** Sciatica or herniated discs pressing on spinal nerves.
- **Structural problems:** Abnormal curvature of the spine, such as scoliosis.
- **Infections or diseases:** Osteomyelitis, tumors, or other underlying medical conditions.



Per the National Institute of Health, 80% of the population will experience lower back pain.¹ In 2020, the World Health Organization reported lower back pain is the leading cause of disability worldwide, affecting 619 million people globally.²

What is the Difference between Acute and Chronic Pain

The duration of pain determines whether it is acute or chronic. Providers define acute pain lasting less than 12 weeks, chronic more than 12 weeks. Identifying cause and length of pain episode is essential for proper treatment.

Emergency Symptoms: Seek Immediate Medical Attention

Lower back pain can become permanently life-changing:

If you have any of the listed symptoms, go to an emergency room.

- Numbness to extremity

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- Weakness
- Inability to pee or poop
- Severe pain in abdomen or legs



How to relieve lower back pain fast at home

Freepik image

Per World Health Organization, 90% of LBP is acute and may be treated at home.³ The internet provides immediate access to information but may not always be accurate. If you have any questions, seek medical care.

Fast Pain Relief: Cold and Hot therapy

Ice packs and heating pads are effective for acute pain management. Cold therapy is best within the first 24-48 hours to help decrease inflammation. Cold packs should be wrapped in a towel and placed on an injury site for only 20-minute increments to avoid risk of damage to the skin.

Heat therapy is most effective after 48 hours, limiting contact to 20-minute intervals to protect the skin. Heat encourages blood flow to the site to promote healing. Be overly cautious If you have decreased sensation due to neurologic impairment (diabetes, neurologic disorder, etc.) check skin at least every 10 minutes to avoid burns.

Best Pain Relief Options: Available Without a Prescription

Great Oral Medication to Complement Hot/Cold Therapy

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications, such as ibuprofen, decrease swelling and pain. This class of medication is not for long-term use due to the risk of gastrointestinal bleeding. Medication interactions are possible, check with your pharmacist.

Analgesic medications, such as acetaminophen, alter how the body perceives pain. Another benefit is their anti-pyretic properties to treat fevers. Follow dosing instructions to avoid toxicity. If you have liver disease, the maximum daily intake is only 2000mg. People with normal liver functions can take up to 4000mg a day.

Fast-acting Topical Medications

There are cream and patch administration options. Avoid skin damage by never placing on an open wound and remove patches after 12 hours.

Laura Bublitz
Laura@bublitzrn.com

Lidocaine is available as a cream or patch and works by blocking pain signals to the brain. Relief can begin in 5 minutes using cream and within 30 minutes with patch.

Menthol cream opens the blood vessels and increases flow to help healing. The cooling effect soothes the muscles, nerves, and joints. Brands: Aspercreme and Bengay.

Capsaicin blocks pain signals to the brain. The chili pepper component causes a warming sensation. Do not get into your eyes. Brands: Salonpas Hot and Capzasin.

Camphor desensitizes specific pain receptors to provide temporary relief. Brands: Anti-tch and Artic relief.

Methyl salicylate is found in many topical creams; it is an anti-inflammatory and blocks pain signals to the brain. Brand: Bengay.

Photo by [Elsa Olofsson](#) on [Unsplash](#)

CBD creams claim to help with:

- neuropathic pain
- muscle spasms
- Inflammation

Per experts more clinical research is needed to prove decreases pain.⁴



CBD

Back Exercises at Home

Maintaining mobility is essential for quicker recovery. Bedrest should be limited; too little movement can decrease function. Stretching exercises are effective in loosening muscles and decreasing pain.

Pain becomes less intense with these interventions, which encourages more mobility. Be sure to carefully follow the video examples to ensure proper form. Done improperly increases risk of delaying recovery. Any doubts or concerns, contact medical provider or physical therapist.

- Knee to chest
- Trunk rotation
- Cat-cow
- Seated hamstring stretch
- Pelvic tilt



- Flexion rotation
- Supported bridge
- Belly flop
- Abdominal curls

Suffering with chronic pain? Try these proven methods

Adding Natural Herbs to Your Pain Toolbox



Decrease Pain with Anti-inflammatory Drinks

Comprehensive research shows natural ingredients have a role in pain relief. Dr. Vigay Vad recommends daily anti-inflammatory drinks to improve blood flow, which decreases swelling and pain.⁶ The drinks he recommends are turmeric milk (almond milk if dairy sensitivity), tart cherry juice, and ginger-green tea.

Improve Sleep with Natural Supplements

Pain is a leading cause of insomnia. Sleep-deprivation elevates our pain sensitivity and impairs our coping mechanisms. Suggested over-the-counter sleep aids:

- Melatonin- natural sleep hormone
- L-theanine- assists in relaxation
- Valerian- plant based compound helps to get to sleep faster and stay asleep longer
- Vitamin C and B6- control metabolism and promote good sleep



Comfrey plant
Wirestock on Freepik

Centuries of Herbal Pain Relief- Be Informed

These remedies have analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties. There are risks with these compounds, consulting with a medical or holistic practitioner is recommended prior to use.

- Comfrey: administer topically for 5 days to achieve pain relief
 - Not for Oral consumption
 - Toxicity occurs with overuse and if on open skin
- Devil's Claw: oral, only take up to 12 weeks; CAUTION interacts with many medications
- Frankincense-non-steroidal anti-inflammatory without side effects of over-the-counter options
 - Oral-100mg-250mg/day for 6 months showed decrease in LBP
 - Aromatherapy
- Willow bark-proven to help LBP; many medication interactions, and side effects
 - Discuss with provider prior to taking

Did You Know Your Diet May be Causing you Pain?

Several foods can cause pain by increasing systemic inflammation. Experts believe 60% of adults in the US consume diets that elevate this risk.⁷

Inflammatory foods:

- red meat- beef, pork, lamb
- processed meats-lunchmeat, bacon sausage, hot dogs
- refined grains-white bread, white rice, pasta, breakfast cereals
- fried food-French fries, chicken, donuts
- Sweetened drinks-soda
- Alcohol
- Omega 6 fats-sunflower oil, corn oil
- Dairy products-milk

Professionals identify diets high in protein with healthy anti-inflammatory foods that can reduce pain.



These anti-inflammatory foods are:

- fruit, vegetables
- high omega three foods (walnut, fish, almonds)
- specific herbs (rosemary, turmeric, ginger, cinnamon, and cloves).
- Polyphenols-naturally occur in coffee, tea, and dark chocolate
- Protein-beans, nuts, whole grains
- Fiber-whole grain, fruit, vegetables
- Antioxidant foods-green, white, and black tea, coffee, vegetables

Proper Position and Posture Decreases Pain

Focusing on your posture while walking and sitting is a great beginning to improving your lower back pain.

Positioning: Saves Your Back

Workstation set-up can adversely affect your lower back pain. The solution is to ensure the monitor, keyboard, desk, and chair are in the proper position for you. When posture keeps spine in alignment it will decrease back pain. See the image below.

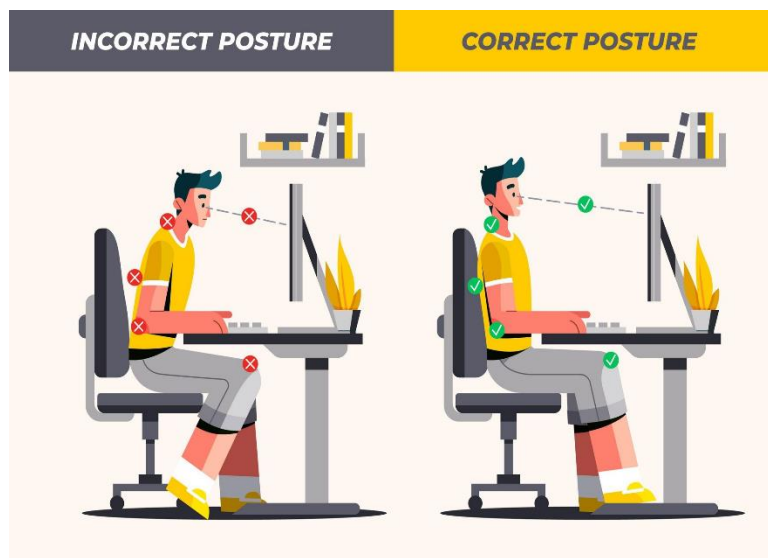


Image by pikisuperstar on Freepik

One of the biggest culprits of lower back pain is lifting objects that are too heavy or using poor technique. When you lift a heavy object, keep it close to you and use your legs to lift, not your back. If the object is too heavy, ask for assistance, or use a mechanical device to take the pressure off your back. The time it takes to do it right will be well worth it to avoid back pain or more serious injuries.

Wake Up Refreshed: Sleep Positioning

Sleeping positions cause back pain when the spine is not aligned by putting pressure on lower back.

Best position: sleep on your side- pull legs toward chest with pillow under knees, to align spine

- Alternate positions if unable to sleep on your side
 - Back sleeper-pillow under knees and neck: make sure neck is aligned with chest and back. This relaxes muscles and keeps the natural curve of your spine.
 - Stomach sleeper-puts a lot of pressure on your lower back: pillow under hips and lower belly, thin pillow under head helps decrease lower back stress

Pregnancy: Specific Posture and Position for Safety

When standing keep spine aligned, keep even weight on both legs, shoulder back, chest forward, and wear low heel comfortable shoes. It is best not to stand too long; blood can pool in the lower extremities causing swelling and pain.

Sleeping when you are pregnant: What is that?

Sleeping can be quite challenging toward the end of pregnancy. Experts recommend lying on your side, especially in the second and third trimester. The weight of the uterus can compress your abdominal blood vessels, decrease blood flow, and deprive the baby of oxygen.

Sleep on your side, body inline and knees slightly bent. Place pillow under the back, between legs, and under belly. Refer to posture and sleep images provided.



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Any difficulty with sleeping should be discussed with your provider to ensure safe positioning for you and baby,

Still having Lower Back Pain?

Popular Alternative Therapies



Acupuncture has been around for centuries in Chinese culture with proven pain-relief results. Needles are placed along pain points on your body to stimulate nerves, muscles, and connective tissue. The goal is to activate the body's own natural pain killers.

Massage can loosen stiff muscles to decrease pain with movement, allowing more participation in recovery.

Hydrotherapy consists of exercising in water. Water provides minimal impact allowing longer workouts with less pain.

Meditation and Cognitive Behavior Therapy are processes in your control. Evidence has shown that people, especially those with chronic pain, are able to decrease their perception of pain with these methods:

- Proper meditation technique recommends a quiet, dark room. Find a comfortable position, take deep slow breaths, and focus on your breathing. The increase in concentration with deep breathing causes release of endorphins. These are natural hormones in our body to decrease pain.

- Cognitive behavior therapy focuses on identifying negative thought patterns and behaviors. Through this practice, patients can restructure how they perceive pain. This is a lengthy process and should be started with an appropriate practitioner.

No Relief? Seek Medical Evaluation

If in 1 week your pain has not resolved using at home remedies, seek medical attention. Evaluation of more serious conditions should be done sooner than later.

What Your Doctor May Do

Expect to have a thorough physical exam with a focus on the area of pain. Usually, radiology studies are required for the provider to determine the root of the pain, this could include x-ray, CT scan, or MRI.

Pain management is a top priority. Tell your provider all the medications and treatment methods you have tried. This gives a better picture of what makes symptoms worse or better, so they can develop a successful treatment plan.

What Do I Do Now?

Follow provider treatment plan, stick to it. Many of us want to play doctor and think we know best, but the best chance of your pain improving is to follow doctors' orders. Update your provider of progress. If not improving, they will need to adjust your treatment plan.

Having Emergency Symptoms? Go to ER



Any emergency symptoms, go to the ER or urgent care immediately.

- Loss of sensation
- Inability to poop or pee
- Increased pain
- Inability to move

How to Relieve Lower Back Pain: Empower yourself!

Empower yourself by learning more about lower back pain, causes, symptoms, and home remedies. Become your own expert, so you can make the fastest recovery possible.

Patient resources

Just a few to start your healing journey.

[Resources - U.S. Pain Foundation](#)

<https://www.acpanow.com/#/>

[International Association for the Study of Pain | IASP](#)

[National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases \(NIAMS\)](#)

[Back pain - Symptoms and causes - Mayo Clinic](#)

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- ⁵ "Back pain relief stretches-5 Minute real time routine", AskDrJo; March 16, 2020 [Back Pain Relief Stretches – 5 Minute Real Time Routine](#)
- ⁶ Vad, Vigay M.D.; 7 ways to relieve back pain; Spine health, January 10, 2020 [7 Ways to Relieve Back Pain Naturally | Spine-health](#)
- ⁷ Ohio University, This incredibly popular diet could be increasing your cancer risk; October 2, 2024 [This Incredibly Popular Diet Could Be Increasing Your Risk of Cancer](#)
- ⁸ "Preventing Back and Pelvic Pain in Pregnancy"; Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust; June 7, 2016 [Preventing Back and Pelvic Pain in Pregnancy](#)