



Back injury: aftercare advice

Information for patients from the Emergency Department

Please speak to a healthcare professional before following the advice below

Should I rest my back after my injury?

No. Wherever possible you should continue to move around, but move carefully and gently. When you do sit down, do not stay sitting for more than 15 minutes.

What if the movements are causing me pain?

You must not allow your pain to increase or spread to other areas. If it does, stop what you are doing and move to a position that reduces your pain. Do not bend, slouch, stoop, or lift for at least three to four days after your injury or while you still have pain.

Back pain: advice for when you lie down



1 to 2 pillows under your knees

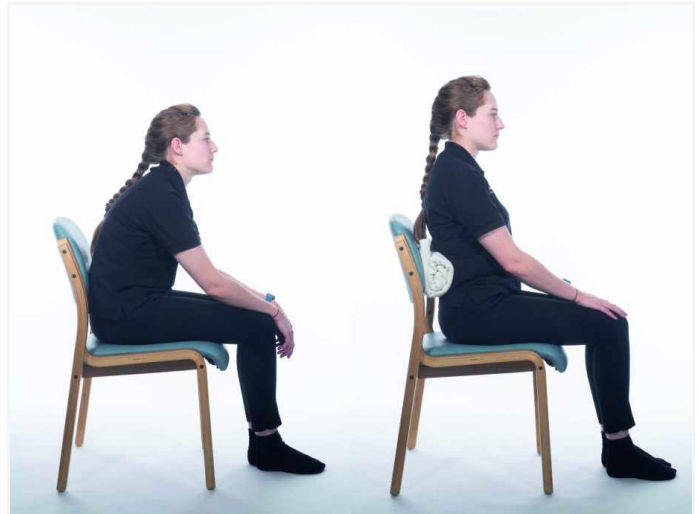


1 to 2 pillows between your knees

How can I help my back get better?

- Change position regularly and avoid standing still for too long.

- If you must stand for a long time, raise one foot and rest it on a small step, this will help your backache. Stand evenly on both feet where possible (good posture is needed for good back care).
- Keep a hollow in the small of your back at all times.
- Avoid sitting, it is better to lie down or walk about. If you must, sit for short periods of time only (up to 15 minutes) in a firm chair. Use a rolled-up towel in the small of your back.
- Avoid soft chairs or sitting with your legs straight out in front, for example in a bath or in bed.



Examples of poor and good sitting positions

How can I help with the pain?

You can **use ice** (or a cold flannel) to ease the pain, by wrapping crushed ice in a damp towel and placing it over your painful area. Leave the ice in place for 10 to 15 minutes, then remove. Doing this every three to four hours may help with your muscle spasms and pain.

Caution: ice can cause burns, so do not put it directly on your skin, always use a towel. Protect sensitive skin with baby oil.

After using the ice-pack, a hot-water bottle may also help in reducing pain and spasm. Do not use heat or ice if:

- you have a skin abnormality, such as poor circulation, or thin shiny flaky, dry skin
- your skin feels numb
- you have Sickle Cell Anaemia; or
- it makes your symptoms worse.

Treatment should also include regular painkillers (such as ibuprofen or paracetamol, if you are able to take them) unless you have been told otherwise by the practitioner that treated you in the Emergency Department.

When should I start exercising or doing my normal activities again?

Exercises should be carried out on the advice of your physiotherapist, doctor, or nurse practitioner.

As your symptoms start to get better, slowly start doing your normal activities again. Be guided by your pain and mix short periods of activity with rest to start with.

If your pain or swelling gets worse, contact your GP for advice.

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 783145, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals website (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/information-for-patients/patient-information/>).

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