

## ENGAGEMENT

# Blog – Physical health: Back Pain

The following blog has been prepared by TAL. It is available to use in white-label format for communications and is designed to provide information on positive ways to support physical health.

-BLOG-

## 6 ways to help prevent back pain

**[DURING APR]** World Health & Safety at Work Day on 28<sup>th</sup> April is a great time for a refresh on the simple steps you can take to help protect your back and prevent lower back pain. If you'd like to know more, our life insurance partner TAL, has provided some useful guidance on the steps you can take.

**[DURING OCTOBER]** National Safe Work Month in October is a great time for a refresh on the simple steps you can take to help protect your back and prevent lower back pain. If you'd like to know more, our life insurance partner TAL, has provided some useful guidance on the steps you can take.

**[ALL YEAR]** There are some simple steps you can take to help protect your back and prevent lower back pain. If you'd like to know more, our life insurance partner TAL, has provided some useful guidance on the steps you can take.

About 4 million Australians have back pain on any one day, so it's a very common problem.<sup>1</sup> There is a large spectrum of types of back pain ranging from mild to severe and lasting a few days to several years. Even short lived and milder pain can have a significant impact on daily life. The good news is that there are many simple things you can do to reduce your risk factors and your chances of developing back pain in the future.

Some risk factors we cannot change such as older age, a family history of degenerative disc disease and some diseases such as arthritis and cancer. However, there are some risk factors associated with back pain which we can change, such as being overweight, smoking, a lack of exercise, occupational hazards, poor posture and stress.

### 1. Weight loss

Being overweight increases the weight and stress being put through the lower back and other joints. People with a BMI above 30 are at increased risk of lower back pain so keeping your weight down not only benefits your overall health, but your back health as well.

### 2. Quit smoking

Together with having overall negative impact on your health, smoking is linked to musculoskeletal conditions including lower back pain, neck pain, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis. It causes fatigue and impacts blood flow, slowing healing.

### 3. Regular exercise & movement

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). (2024). *Chronic musculoskeletal conditions*

People who regularly exercise are less likely to develop back pain and recover more quickly if it does occur. Any type of physical activity and regular movement will help, but walking, running, swimming, yoga, Pilates or core training are particularly useful. It's important to choose a form of exercise that you enjoy and can work into your regular schedule a few times a week.

#### **4. Ergonomic practices at work**

If you work in an office, ensure that you take regular breaks from your desk and review your desk set up to make sure it's ergonomically supportive. If you perform physical tasks at work, such as lifting, make sure that you utilise appropriate equipment and use good lifting practices. Your work, health and safety team will be able to assist.

#### **5. Improving your posture**

Try to maintain a good posture and avoid slouching when seated or standing. Hunching over handheld electronic devices for prolonged periods can negatively impact posture, so ensure you take a break and move around.

#### **6. Reducing stress**

Stress can play a big part in lower back pain, especially chronic pain. It can cause changes in posture, activity levels and increase muscle tension. Addressing stress triggers, together with regular exercise can help manage stress-related back pain.

**-ENDS-**

**DISCLAIMER** [please add to your post]

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