

BACK PAIN FACTS AND FICTION

- Low back pain is the leading cause of disability worldwide.
- Treatments can often be costly, time-consuming and may not work
- Unhelpful or misleading beliefs about your back pain can cause greater levels of pain, disability and have a damaging impact on your quality of life.

Here are the 10 most-common unhelpful beliefs about low back pain:

- 1 It's always a serious medical condition
- 2 Gets worse in later life
- 3 Pain means tissue damage
- 4 Scans and investigations always needed
- 5 If it hurts when moving, it's a signal to stop
- 6 It is caused by poor posture
- 7 It is caused by weak 'core' muscles (and having a strong ones protects against future pain)
- 8 Repeated loading of your spine results in tissue damage
- 9 Pain flare-ups mean tissue damage and require rest
- 10 Treatments such as strong medication, injections and surgery are effective and necessary

Once any serious pathology has been ruled out, scientific evidence has shown that understanding these helpful facts below, can bring about a positive mindset change to help you cope better with your back pain:

- 1 Low back pain is not a serious life-threatening medical condition
- 2 Most episodes improve and don't get worse with age
- 3 A negative mindset, fear avoidance behaviour and poor coping methods are more strongly associated with ongoing pain than any tissue damage
- 4 Results from scans or imaging don't determine your prognosis and won't improve the outcome of your current back pain
- 5 Graduated exercise and movement in all directions are safe and healthy for your spine
- 6 Your posture and the alignment of your spine while standing, sitting or lifting does not predict low back pain or how long it lasts
- 7 A weak core does not cause low back pain. Although it is good to have strong trunk muscles, it is also helpful to relax them when they aren't needed.
- 8 Spine movement and loading are safe and build structural resilience when done progressively
- 9 Painful flare-ups are often related to changes in activity, stress and mood rather than tissue damage
- 10 Effective care for low back pain can be relatively cheap and safe and includes education, and optimising physical and mental strength.

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