

# How to avoid work related back pain



Back pain is extremely common in today's population, and approximately 85% of adults will experience non-specific back pain at some point in their life.

Of course, physical stress such as repetitive movements, heavy lifting, or staying in the same position for too long can lead to some back discomfort. However, there is a great deal of evidence showing that back pain and pain in general is a very multifactorial phenomenon and the pain experience can also be affected by mental wellbeing, stress levels, pain perception, as well as work/life balance.

One of the most effective ways for preventing or decreasing your amount of back pain is to stay physically active, both when at work and when off. Take breaks throughout the day when you are able, and switch positions often.

Clinical guidelines and research suggest that you should try to avoid being absent from work if you have back pain. Limiting work absenteeism improves your chances of recovering quicker and reduces the risk of developing an ongoing back problem. Years ago, the suggested recovery plan for back pain was to remain sedentary: stay in bed, rest, don't do anything active. But evidence now shows that this is not the best course of action and may in fact lengthen your recovery.

If it is not possible to stay in work, try to return quickly, and ask your employer for modifications that may make your day more manageable. Many people assume that physical activity can damage your back, but the evidence shows that physical inactivity can do more harm than good in the long run.

Of course, you shouldn't throw yourself into doing things that might trigger pain or worsen the symptoms. Sometimes you may need to avoid or adjust certain activities for a while to allow yourself to recover. But remember that gradually returning to activity is key to recovery and will help prevent back pain long-term.

## About Ascenti

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