

# LOW BACK PAIN

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## A PRIMER

Almost everyone gets low back pain (LBP) at some point in life. It is the most common cause of disability in the world. Awkward positions, lifestyle factors, genetics, and changes in routine that impact the back can trigger an episode.

## EARLY

Continue to stay active. You can avoid painful movements. Early imaging isn't necessary unless unusual symptoms exist like changes in bowel/bladder control, fever, loss of muscle function, or you have a recent history of cancer.

## PREVALENCE

LBP is common. At any one point in time, about 1/4 of the population has it.



## STRUCTURE

Several structures in the back (discs, joints) can be irritated during an episode, just like a sprained ankle. It's usually not helpful to try to identify the exact cause of LBP, which can lead to expensive and useless tests or procedures.

## TREATMENT

The focus should target YOUR specific goals and get you independent with a home program. This may include:

- Reducing pain (but not always eliminating it)
- Moving the joints of your spine again
- Restoring normal control of the joints
- Restoring normal muscle function
- Stay at work

## PROGNOSIS

If this began <1 month ago, the prognosis is excellent. A small number of people go on to have pain 1 year later or episodes that return. Staying physically active, eating/sleeping well, and doing any recommended exercises can help.