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Media Release – Suffering from the Effects of Back Pain?

From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



Suffering From the Effects of Back Pain?

Lower back pain is very common with around 80-90% of adults having some sort of back pain in their lifetime.

In fact, it's the third biggest contributor to health loss in New Zealand, as measured in disability-adjusted life-years with prevalence increasing in the older population. Our spines are made up of vertebrae and divided into sections, from top to bottom. Pain in the lower, lumbar region is the main area for back pain and is more than twice as common as upper back pain.

There are many causes for general lower back pain, and while exercise performed inappropriately can be a cause, lack of movement and exercise can also contribute, so striking a balance between rest and activity is important. For those with unexplained back pain, the recommendation is to always check in with a GP or appropriately qualified health professional. Once anything serious has been ruled out, exercise will most often form part of a plan to alleviate back pain, and part of the pathway to ensure that re occurrence is less likely.

For many sufferers, a 'shared care' approach is applied, with different allied health professionals working together within their expertise, e.g. a regular physiotherapy session alongside personal training sessions or group classes. It's important to let your exercise professional know when you are experiencing pain so they can tailor your programme appropriately, and refer on to other allied health professionals if needed.

As with any form of physical activity there is a risk that exercise can contribute to lower back pain, but this is most often associated with poor technique during exercise, or due to working at a level that is more advanced than the participant is safely able to work within.

Many people find Yoga can be beneficial for alleviating general aches and pains, improving mobility, and stretching muscles. However, even with controlled exercise there is some risk, especially in older adults, or those new to exercise. Again, the most common cause of issues are poses done incorrectly, or at an unsuitable level, by using props and taking exercises at your own pace, the risks can be minimised.

ACC supports many New Zealanders through back pain treatment; with the total cost for ACC funded patients nearly \$58 million. Their treatment guidelines recommend staying active, continuing usual activities as much as possible, and avoiding bed rest to help recovery.

Preventing general back pain in the first place is ultimate goal. In conjunction with regular exercise, there are lifestyle recommendations to reach this target:

- Keep your abdominal and lower back (core) muscles strong.
- Avoid long periods of sitting. Move about and stretch regularly.
- Watch your posture when doing bent over tasks or when twisting and lifting.

More information and references

<https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/nhc-lbp-pathway-to-prioritisation.pdf>

<https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/media/1001/knowning-about-your-low-back-pain-acc.pdf>

https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-safe-way-to-do-yoga-for-back-pain?utm_source=delivra&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=GB20180704-Yoga&utm_id=965379&dlv-ga-memberid=35245478&mid=35245478&ml=965379

http://www.abc.net.au/news/health/2018-06-11/treating-lower-back-pain-without-drugs-and-surgery/9850798?utm_source=Exercise+Right&utm_campaign=f1cd7476e2-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_01_06_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3d7e2c359d-f1cd7476e2-394135565

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NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) - Independent not for profit quality mark of exercise professionals and facilities. Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the “warrant of fitness check” that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver safe exercise advice and instruction. REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) - www.icreps.org

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Exercise Association of New Zealand - Not for profit exercise industry representative organisation. Its *mission is to proactively support a sustainable exercise and fitness industry in New Zealand by growing participation in structured exercise through advocacy, information and industry standards.*

