



Kiran Sawhney is a Wellness Expert.

## BACK IN ACTION



**B**ack problems have become rampant in urban India because of increasing sedentary lifestyle. A majority of people these days spend a major part of their working day sitting at desks, at workstations, or in their cars at a long stretch. These changes in human lifestyle have had a profound, and largely, negative impact on human physiology.

The most common type of back pain is a result of straining the bands of muscles surrounding the spine. Although such strains can occur anywhere along the spine, they happen most often in the curve of the lower back and at the base of the neck.

For many years, it was assumed that back pain was the result of spinal degeneration or injury, especially damage to the inter-vertebral disks. But it is now believed that the leading cause of back pain is simple muscle strain. The symptoms may be sudden and the pain can be acute; but back pain, in actuality, develops over a long period of time.

In most cases, back pain has an associated psychological component. It can be due to a deep-seated emotional or stress-related problem. Women are more prone to back pain because child bearing and rearing depletes the calcium store in their bones.



HOW TO DEAL WITH BACK PAIN?

Active forms of back pain exercise (physical therapy) are necessary to restore spinal health and help alleviate back pain. Movement distributes nutrients into the disc space and soft tissues in the spine, and keeps the discs, muscles, ligaments and joints healthy. Lack of exercise can worsen back pain by leading to stiffness, weakness and de-conditioning.

**G**enerally, a patient's back pain exercise programme should encompass a combination of stretching exercises (such as hamstring stretching), and strengthening exercises (such as dynamic lumbar stabilisation exercise).

But, depending on the patient's specific diagnosis and level of pain, the exercise and rehabilitation programme can be different. So, it is important for patients to see a trainer, who specialises in individualised exercise programme, using the correct form, technique, good posture and right breathing techniques.



Don't we all complain of back pain? But this need not become a part of our life.

Exercises and yogasanas can help keep us perfectly healthy. In this column of *40 Women*, Kiran Sawhney, a Wellness Expert offers help.

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## YOGASANA TECHNIQUES

### COBRA OR BHUJANGASANA

Lie prone on your abdomen. Keep hands under the shoulders and try to lift yourself. Make sure that both heels touch each other. Look up; in this position the navel should touch the floor. Consult your doctor if you have undergone abdominal surgery or are suffering from hernia or have spinal injury.

### SAHAJ PAVANMUKTASANA

Lie supine on your back. Clasp one knee and bring your chin to your knee. Hold this posture for 10 to 30 seconds. If you have cervical spondylitis, do not raise your chin. This helps to stretch hamstrings and thus prevents lower back pain.

### POORNA PAVANMUKTASANA

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on floor. Raise your knees toward your chest. Place both hands under your knees and gently pull your knees close to your chest till you feel a gentle stretch in your lower back. Try to bring your chin closer to your knees. Start with five repetitions, several times a day.

### CHAKRASANA OR THE BRIDGE

Lying supine, place your palms under your shoulders with fingers turned towards the feet. Bend your knees. Now raise your hips, arch your back and push your head and upper part of your body as far as you can. This helps you get rid of stiffness in hip joints.



### SPINAL TWIST

Lying supine, bend your knees. Grab both the ankles and place feet on the floor. Now roll both the knees to one side and stretch out the hands by your sides. This combats the sciatica and stretches upper and mid back.



### DHANURASANA

Lie prone, fold your knees and grab both ankles. Lift yourself up and arch your back. This helps to strengthen the back, but consult your doctor if you have severe lumbar or cervical pain.

### GOMUKHASANA

Place one hand behind your shoulders and reaching behind your back with the other hand interlock the fingers of both hands. Interchange the arms and repeat. This is excellent in the cases of cervical as it opens the shoulder blades. But those with frozen shoulders should not do this.



### WHAT CAUSES BACK PAIN?

- Poor posture
- Improper footwear and walking habits
- Improper lifting of heavy objects
- Straining individual muscles
- Calcium deficiency
- Slouching when sitting
- Prolonged sitting, especially in a chair that does not properly support the back
- Sleeping on soft mattresses
- Kidney, bladder and prostate problems
- Stress
- Pregnancy
- Female pelvic disorders
- Constipation
- Arthritis
- Rheumatism
- Bone disease
- Abnormal curvature of the spine

### SWISS BALL TECHNIQUES

Lying prone on the ball, dig your feet firmly in the floor. Slowly raise your upper body. Exhale as you lift yourself and inhale as you lift down. This helps dramatically in strengthening the back muscles. Conclude the above exercise with this amazing, miraculous stretch. Place your hands under the shoulders and lift yourself. Let the back stretch, relax and release all tensions. These are therapeutic balls that help in self-massaging. These are used world over not just for cervical stretch and massage but also for lower back, shoulders, hamstrings etc. Their effects are felt right after taking first sessions.



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"Rain dies quickly, and lets her weary prisoners go; the fiercest agonies have shorter night."

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