

Say Goodbye to Back Pain!

Back pain is a common ailment for office workers in Hong Kong. It is even more prevalent than cold or flu! But where is the pain exactly? Why is the pain there? How can it be cured? To alleviate your back pain, it may be helpful to have a correct understanding of the problem, do adequate exercise and do it regularly.

Causes:

The following conditions keep muscles tense and twitching often, finally causing back pain:

- Incorrect vertical/sedentary postures over a long time
- Bending lower back repeatedly over a long time, and moving heavy objects in incorrect postures
- Overweight (excessive abdominal weight will over-exert back muscles and the vertebra.)
- lack of exercise
- accidents and injuries

Cure:

To alleviate back pain, a lot of people just rub some analgesic ointment or take some painkillers. Why not prevent it before it happens? Just rectify the incorrect postures and do some back stretch for more agility, and then you can prevent excessive pressure on the lumbar vertebrae and the vicinity, and hence prevent injury of muscles, ligaments, tendons, etc. Here are some exercises for prevention of back pain:

Task	Notes
1. Lateral stretch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Stand astride, and left arm akimbo. Lift right arm upright. -Push pelvis to the right until the muscles on the right are flexed. Stop pushing and hold for about 10-30 seconds. -Relax and return to starting position. Repeat on the other side.
2. Seated toe grab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sit on the floor. Stretch out the legs and put hands on thighs. -Flex toes upwards and extend body forward. Try to reach toe tips with fingertips. - Stop leaning farther when you feel the muscles on the back of the thighs and lower back are flexed. Hold this position for about 10-30 seconds.
3. One knee to chest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lie flat on floor. Press head and right heel against floor. -Embrace right leg below kneecap with both arms. Pull the kneecap towards chest. -Stop pulling as soon as you feel lower back muscles being flexed. Hold this position for about 10-30 seconds. - Relax and return to starting position. Repeat on the other side.
4. Cat stretch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Press hands and kneecaps against floor. Push the back and abdomen towards floor and hold a few seconds. -Gradually push the back towards ceiling and hold a few seconds. -Stop pushing as soon as you feel lower back muscles being flexed. Repeat four to five times.

*Remarks:

1. All the four tasks can be repeated two or three times. They can be done as often as you wish, night and day, even at work.
2. The extent of stretching should be limited to such without causing pain. Remember to do all exercises slowly and maintain easy breathing all the time.
3. If back pain persists, please stop doing the exercises at once and consult medical professionals.

Don't overlook your back pain. It may be a signal to remind you that you should be more careful about your body and lifestyle, and that you should understand your lower back more to prevent back pain from getting worse. Exercise can strengthen the flexibility of your tendons and joints and boost muscle power, so that your vertebra is better supported for your good health!