

Three Common Myths About Back Pain

Three Common Myths About Back Pain

Low back pain is one of the most common conditions treated by physiotherapists and if you are unlucky enough to have been a sufferer, you know that severe back pain can take over your life. With improved understanding, health professionals have come to identify some common myths about back pain that are inaccurate, misleading or even counterproductive.

Myth #1 – Discs can ‘slip’ out of place

Sitting between the vertebrae of the spine are soft discs that provide flexibility and shock absorption to the spine. In the past, many health professionals including doctors and physiotherapists told patients that these discs had ‘slipped’ as a way of explaining their pain to them. While this was helpful to some extent, it is not entirely accurate, as these discs are actually very secure and rarely, if ever ‘slip’ out of place. Discs may bulge slightly or in some cases tear, however more often than not these injuries will heal without any permanent damage and exist in many people without causing any pain at all. Thinking that a part of your spine has permanently ‘slipped’ out of place can cause you to move differently, which can create more pain and dysfunction in itself.

Myth #2 – If you have low back pain, you should stay in bed

When back pain strikes, our natural instinct is to rest, avoid movement and wait for the pain to pass. However, studies have shown that being active and performing targeted and gentle exercises can help improve low back pain. In fact, our impulse to stop moving and protect our spines can actually cause abnormal movement patterns and stress, leading to ongoing pain

after the original injury has healed. If you are unsure of what kind of exercises you should be doing, your physiotherapist can help guide you with a targeted exercise program.

Myth #3 – Severe pain means severe damage

Pain that is severe, strikes suddenly and without warning can be a very scary experience. If this happens to you, you could be forgiven for assuming you must have sustained a very serious injury. The fact is, however, that the spine, being surrounded by nerves is a particularly sensitive area of the body and pain in this area can be very strong without significant damage. A small ligament sprain or muscle tear can actually cause a large amount of pain and it is common for intense symptoms to settle down quickly, even disappearing within a few days. In many cases, symptoms that last for longer than 2-3 weeks are caused by changes to your movement patterns in response to this pain and not the original injury itself.

If you are suffering from back pain, the best person to see is your physiotherapist. They can help you to recover without any complications or side effects and help you safely return to your usual activities while also ruling out any serious damage that might need further investigation.

None of the information in this article is a replacement for proper medical advice. Always see a medical professional for advice on your individual injury.

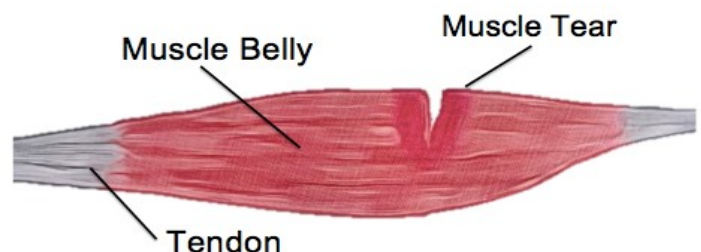
The Four Biggest Mistakes You Can Make After A Muscle Tear

Our muscles play an important role in the movement of our body. Without our muscles, we wouldn't be able to bend our elbow or straighten our leg. As our muscles are soft and designed for flexibility, they are also prone to injury and if you have ever had a muscle tear, you know that they can be surprisingly painful.

In the period following a muscle tear, there are a few mistakes we see people make, that can actually make their injury worse and delay healing times. Here are a few of the most common mistakes we see.

1. Stretching

After a muscle tear, the damaged fibres slowly begin to heal and reattach to each other. This process can be quite fragile and during the early stages, aggressive stretching of recovering tissue can impair healing or even lead to more tearing. While gentle stretching a few days after the injury can have a positive effect, you should check with your physiotherapist to ensure you're not stretching too far and causing further damage.



2. Applying H.A.R.M.

Most of us are aware of the acronym R.I.C.E (rest, apply ice, compress the area and elevate) as the recommended treatment in the early stages of an acute injury. The acronym H.A.R.M is

less well known and is used to remember the things you *shouldn't* do after an injury. This stands for applying heat, drinking alcohol, running or massage. All of these activities can increase swelling, pain and increase the damage of the injury in the first 48-72 hours.

3. Failing to see a physiotherapist

The diagnosis of a muscle tear might seem straightforward, however, there might be more going on than you realize. Many conditions can mimic a muscle tear, or you may have suffered a tear due to an underlying weakness or pathology. Having a physiotherapist confirm your muscle tear or identify another condition is vital to ensuring you recover fully.

Your physiotherapist is also able to identify any factors that could lead to further injury and is able to help restore your tissue to its previous level.

4. Returning to sport too early

One of the most confusing things about muscle tears is that often they become less painful while the tissues are still not completely healed. Many people suffer another tear simply because they return to sport too early. While you may feel as though your tissues are back to full strength, the muscle fibres can still be healing and vulnerable to a tear. It is important to test your injury gradually, starting with gentle exercise and building up to high-intensity activities.

Your physiotherapist is able to guide you with a full rehabilitation program. This can help to restore strength, flexibility and control to your damaged muscle, keeping you injury free for the future.

For more information or to make an appointment, you can [BOOK ONLINE](#) or contact your [local clinic](#).