

Pulled Back Muscle? Here Are The 5 Most Important Steps to Take Now



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What should you do when you pull a back muscle?

A pulled back muscle occurs when the muscle is stretched too far, causing small tears within the muscle.

If you haven't already, you probably will at some point experience a pulled back muscle. It could happen during a game of golf, while cleaning the garage, or even on the dance floor.

A pulled back muscle may not sound like a serious injury, but the low back pain can be surprisingly severe. Fortunately, pulled back muscles usually heal within days or weeks.

While that pulled back muscle may seem to come on suddenly, chances are it was a long time coming. You could be ignoring some very important warning signs. Which means if you're not in pain now, you might want to sit up and pay attention.

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Do you sit in a chair all day? Do you exercise incorrectly? Are you under tremendous stress? Are you dehydrated? Are you substantially overweight?

Did you honestly answer yes to one or more of those questions? If so, then you're at greater risk of muscle imbalances, trigger point pain, and at higher risk for injuries like a pulled back muscle.

But when you do experience pulled back muscles what do you do? You probably reach for a **bottle of pain killers** and go lie down. But what should you really do?

Here's the 5 most important steps you can take now to help your body recover quickly from a pulled back muscle:

#1: Apply Cold to the Pulled Back Muscle

You should apply ice to your injury as soon as possible. The sooner you apply the ice the more it will help. Use a cold pack, a zip lock bag of crushed ice, or even a bag of frozen vegetables in a pinch.

Apply the cold pack in a circular massaging motion to prevent the ice from resting in one place too long. You can also place a thin towel between the compress and your skin to help prevent frostbite.

Ice can be applied up to 20 minutes at a time. Repeat over the course of the first few days, or after flare ups. The cold will cause nearby blood vessels to constrict and also help minimize swelling and painful inflammation.

The cold will stimulates your body to rush more oxygen-rich blood full of antibodies and vital nutrients to repair the injury and carry away waste products as it attempts to warm the area.

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#2: Apply Heat to the Pulled Back Muscle

Try applying heat directly after the ice. This is a powerful way to “double-shock” your back muscles out of the pain-spasm cycle.

Apply 20 minutes of ice followed by 20 minutes of heat and repeat up to three times. This should provide some relief from even severe lower back pain.

There are many ways to apply heat, including a long hot shower, ultrasound, heating pad, and pain cream.

As heat is applied, your back muscles relax and circulation increases again as your body sends fresh blood supply to cool the area back to normal. Repeat heat treatments as necessary.

#3: Natural Anti-inflammatories

Think twice before you reach for that bottle of pain killer. It might kill more than just your pain.

The truth is inflammation is a normal part of the healing process. The problem with inflammation is our bodies lose the ability to turn off the inflammatory response as we get older.

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen and naproxen can help with both pain and inflammation, but they also carry significant cardiac and digestive health risks.

A better approach is to replace what your body stops producing enough of as you age... specifically, **systemic proteolytic enzymes**.

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These are the same enzymes your body uses to naturally quell inflammation once healing is complete and clean up excess scar tissue. By giving your body what it needs to heal instead of masking the symptoms, you both reduce painful inflammation and speed up actual recovery time.

#4: Rest – But Not Too Much

Don't rest too long. A little couch time won't hurt, but light activity speeds recovery, so avoid lying down for long periods of time.

Growing evidence shows there is little or no benefit to bed rest over staying active. Listen to your body. Ultimately, your level of pain will determine your level of activity.

As a rule of thumb, if a certain activity led to a pulled muscle don't repeat it for at least a week. For example, if your back pain started after lifting something heavy, avoid lifting heavy objects for at least a week while your back muscle heals.

#5: Stretching and Strengthening

You'll want to be very careful your first couple of days, but some light stretching can often reduce lower back pain from a pulled muscle by relieving tension. Include both strengthening and stretching exercises.

Try this easy stretch while lying in bed. Gently raise your knees from the bed to your chest, then put a slight pressure on your knees for a light stretch in your lower back.

This stretch can help relieve pain spasms in your back faster than waiting on them to resolve on their own. The stretch should not add to your pain, so again, remember to listen to your body.

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Prevent Back Muscle Pain

Often you can avoid back pain by taking some simple protective steps.

Watch what you eat. Stay away from inflammatory foods, such as baked goods, processed foods, fruit juice, soda, sweetened cereals, and fast food. They make your body more sensitive to pain.

Keep fresh fruits and vegetables a main part of your diet. Also eat foods rich in back pain-relieving Omega-3 fatty acids like salmon, sardines, and walnuts.

You need protein in your diet to help repair damaged tissue and to build and strengthen muscle. And don't forget to drink plenty of water to hydrate tissues and organs and allow your body to regulate its temperature throughout the day.

Relieve stress. Many people hold emotional stress in their muscles. Frequent stress, anxiety, and tension can lead to tight muscles and muscle strains. You may be able to prevent new or recurring back pain with simple techniques such as massage and meditation.

Studies show that massage is an effective way to reduce stress and relax tightened muscles. And if you haven't tried meditation, maybe you should. As little as 10 minutes being still, breathing deep, and centering your thoughts can quiet both mind and body after a stressful day.

Support Your Back. What kind of support does your desk chair, car seat, or couch offer? Probably not enough. Try Using a lower back support cushion that allows you to sit up straight and minimises slouching into the chair.

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Chiropractic Care. By improving your Spinal structural Alignment and increasing your joints mobility together with good postural habits and therapeutic stretches, you can relieve excess strain on back muscles that can make you prone to a pulled back muscle.