
Back pain management programme

Frequently asked questions about back pain

Prior to commencing a programme aimed at managing your pain, you may have some questions about the approach we take. This handout aims to answer some of these. If you have further questions please don't hesitate to ask any member of staff.

Do you think my pain is in my mind?

No. During the back pain programme the theory of pain will be explained to you. Your pain is real, although in many cases it is not always clear why it has lasted so long. Unfortunately there may be no cure at present but the longer it continues the more it can affect all aspects of your life. This programme aims to help you improve how you cope with your pain.

Will this programme take my pain away?

Although you will cope with the pain better, it won't go away but it should trouble you less. Coping with pain is not easy and there are no quick fix solutions. However if you implement the principles taught on this programme things should get easier.

If my pain increases after exercise does that mean I am causing harm?

Providing you do the exercises as shown by the physiotherapist you should not harm yourself. You should always work within your tolerance level and try not to overdo things even when you feel you can do more. An increased level of exercise should be done in a planned steady way. Generally any extra pain following exercise will mostly be the effects of long term inactivity. As your muscles and joints get stronger and fitter the extra pain will gradually lessen. The same process happens to everyone who tries new exercises after a long period of inactivity.

Will there ever be a cure?

It is possible that your pain will gradually lessen over time. Or eventually someone will find a way of treating the underlying cause and therefore cure the pain. You will find it easier to cope with your pain when you are satisfied it has been investigated and treated thoroughly and it is up to you to see what you can do for yourself. There is a great deal you can do by learning and practising the approach taught on the programme – at the very least you will achieve a better quality of life.

Why should this programme work any better than things I've tried already?

There are no guarantees that this will work better. However the programme is based on what has been learnt from people with chronic pain over a long period of time and there is a great deal of evidence that it can help. Where you feel there are similarities between things you've tried in the past and this programme, it may be useful to think why it didn't work then – maybe the problem was with the way you applied it. It may be useful to discuss this with a member of staff.

Even though it has worked for others will it work for me?

We have found that most people who have gone through the programme have achieved something and many people consequently make major changes. However it is dependent on:

- **how much you put into it**
- **how ready you are for it** – if you don't accept that your doctor has done all that is possible, you may not be ready
- **other worries and pressures** – stresses at home or financial worries may make it harder for you to focus on the programme

However, the success of the programme does **not** depend on the severity of your pain, the original cause of your pain or how long you have had it.