

**Enjoy Long Lasting Pain Relief**

**10 Simple Tips To  
Help Ease**

# **Lower Back Pain**

**Without the use of  
Painkillers, Doctors or  
Surgery!**



**Guide by: Thomas Gibbons M.Ost.  
Osteopath, Gibbons Therapy Clinic**

## About the Author:

### Thomas Gibbons M.Ost

Gibbons Therapy Osteopathic Clinic Owner & Principle Osteopath



Over the past 3 years residents of Billericay Essex & the surrounding area along with athletes of all levels have consulted with me and the Gibbons Therapy Osteopathic clinic in the pursuit for answers to help solve their frustrating aches and pains associated with their sports, their work or just their daily life.

Having worked for 2 years at the British School of Osteopathy multi-specialty clinic in London to now owning my own practice, I have worked with professional athletes, casual runners, children, expectant mothers, critical care and of course the 'general patient', so I have seen it all.

My main goal with any patient that comes through clinics door is to give detailed explanations of what is going on so they don't feel like they are being left in the dark along with a well thought out treatment plan so that they can achieve their goals; whether that goal is a quick recovery so that they are able to return to daily life or their favourite sport as quick as possible or something as simple as being able to get out of bed in the morning with substantially less pain and more movement, keeping them off of painkillers and away from the doctor's office!

# **A personal message from Thomas Gibbons and the Gibbons Therapy Osteopathic Clinic**

*I would like to start off by saying welcome to Gibbons Therapy and thank you for taking the time to download this guide.*

*The majority of people will suffer with back pain at some point in their lives with most not knowing the primary reason for the pain and is often the number 1 reason people visit their doctors for consultation.*

*If you are dealing with back pain, you are not alone. Almost 10 million Britons suffer pain almost daily resulting in a major impact on their quality of life.*

*I've been a sufferer of lower back pain myself over the years. It first came about in my mid-to-late teens when at the time, I was an avid footballer for my Sunday league team as well as training at a competitive level in Trampolining, the latter of which could often be rather unforgiving on my back health.*

*Fast forward to the current day; I spend most of my days in the clinic where I am usually stood up, working over the treatment table treating patients which does not leave me free of the occasional 'twinge'.*

*These experiences have helped me shape the way I understand, treat and effectively care for others who also have back pain.*

*As a result, I have devised a 'Back Wellness Plan' to help manage the possibility of back pain and since I have been following it I am proud to say that I have minimal flare ups and can move and exercise without limitation, struggle or pain!*

*Improving lower back pain is all about having a plan which has you avoid and prevent the movements and situations that cause you pain whilst continually utilising muscles and movements that can help prevent back pain occurring.*

*I've created this guide to help get you on the road to prevention and recovery. Inside are tips and tricks that helped me and greatly reduced my own and many of my patients' pain and I hope you will have the same results.*

*Also a reminder that there is no "magic fix" for treating lower back pain. What works for one person may not help another. So, use the tips in this guide that work and forget the ones that don't.*

*Please enjoy, take care of yourself and get yourself moving!*

**Thomas Gibbons M.Ost**

**Gibbons Therapy Osteopathic Clinic**

# 10 Simple Ways To Ease Your Lower Back Pain

## 1. Limit your bed rest & keep moving

For many years, getting bed rest was the normal advice. But current studies recommend no bed rest at all and stress that staying in bed longer than 48 hours not only won't help but it may, in fact, actually delay your recovery.

Your back muscles and tissues need consistent blood flow bringing new oxygen in to the damaged muscles to promote faster healing. Rest does not improve blood flow or tissue regeneration.

Staying in bed for any prolonged period can make you stiff and increase pain. When you don't move and bend, you lose muscle strength and flexibility. With bed rest, you lose about 1 percent of your muscle strength each day. And you can lose 20 to 30 percent in a week. It becomes more difficult to return to any activity. As you become weaker and stiffer your recovery takes longer.

The sooner you start moving, even a little bit, or return to activities such as walking, the faster you are likely to improve. Walking at a moderate pace for 15-20 minutes can significantly aid recovery from low back pain. Walking helps to improve blood flow, range of motion, and provide simple mobility to the nervous system. Often, when you first start walking with lower back pain, you will find that you finish your walk feeling better than when you started.

## 2. Chill out!

A question I am often asked is "Should I use cold or heat on my back?"

The short answer is both! However it is important to take note of how long it has been since you acquired your injury.

Ice is best used in the first 24-48 hours after an injury as it greatly aids in reducing inflammation. This means there will be less swelling in the affected area.

Even though using heat helps reduce pain and begins relaxing the muscles it actually speeds up the inflammatory process which will lead to more swelling and less movement.

After 48 hours you can switch to heat if you prefer it. Whatever method you decide to use make sure to wrap your ice/icepacks and heat packs/hot water bottles in a towel or kitchen roll so you do not freeze or burn your skin. After 20 minutes application take it off to give your skin a rest.

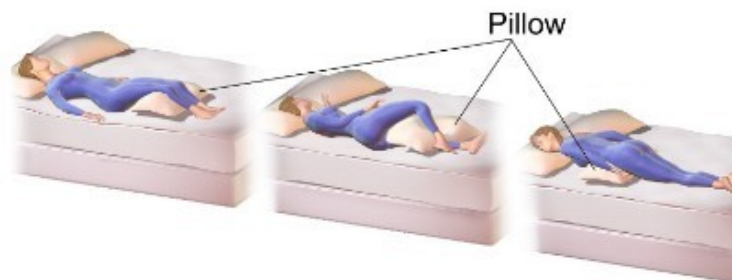
If pain persists, talk with a doctor or medical professional.

### **3. Utilise pillows when you sleep**

For most people with back pain, sleeping can be a true struggle. One night you can't sleep on your back and then the next night you struggle to sleep on your side. It can be one of the most frustrating and annoying consequences of lower back pain.

The issue with this is that getting a good night's sleep is crucial if you want to get to your goal of being pain free. Below are some helpful tips on how using spare pillows will change the way you sleep for the better by improving your back pain and letting you catch some much needed Z's.

- When you sleep on your back use 1-2 pillows under your knees to help take the load off your lumbar spine from the pull of your legs.
- When you lay on your side use 1-2 small pillows between your knees to help keep your pelvis in a neutral alignment.
- When you lay on your front, position 1-2 small pillows at the top of your hips and on your stomach. This slightly elevates your pelvis, taking the strain off of your lower back. Sleeping on your stomach is regarded as the worst position to sleep in when suffering with lower back pain. If possible try to avoid sleeping like this if you can.



### **4. Maintain a healthy weight**

Staying fit is one of the most important recommendations for avoiding back pain. Any extra weight adds more stress to your back and can cause pain. Some of the most common obesity-related problems include musculoskeletal and joint related pain. For people who are overweight, attention to overall weight loss is important as every pound adds strain to the muscles and ligaments in the back.

In order to compensate for extra weight, the spine can become tilted and stressed unevenly. As a result, over time, the back may lose its proper support and an unnatural curvature of the spine may develop.

Eating a healthy diet filled with fruits, vegetables and a lower amount of processed foods, as well as taking some form of regular exercise, can keep your weight in a healthy range and help keep your back healthy.

## 5. Stretch your lower back

It's important that you stretch your lower back with safety and care. Be especially gentle and cautious if you have any type of injury or health concern. It's best to talk to your healthcare provider first.

Below are two stretches specifically targeted to relieve lower back pain. As you go through these stretches, take your time and pay close attention to your breathing. Use your breath as a guide to make sure you don't strain or overdo it. You should be able to breathe comfortably and smoothly throughout each pose or stretch. You can do these stretches once or twice a day. But if the pain seems to get worse, or you're feeling very sore, take a day off from stretching.

**First stretch:** Knee Hugs – Knee hugs are one of my favourite stretches to prescribe to my patient. It's very effective in relieving lower back pain as it stretches all the muscles in the lower back, loosening them up and creating space between each of the lumbar vertebrae (Spine). This gives the discs and nerves a bit of relaxation time and allows them to calm down which in turn relieves your back pain.

But the best part about knee hugs..... They're easy! So easy you can do them in bed! As a matter of fact that's one of the times I urge you to do this exercise. Performing a set of knee hugs in the morning gives your back a chance to 'warm up' before stepping out of bed so you won't feel so creaky when you do.

### **How to perform the Knee Hugs stretch:**

- Lie completely flat on your back on a comfortable surface like a yoga mat or your bed.
- Draw one knee into your chest, clasping your hands behind your thigh or at the top of your shinbone whilst keeping your other leg as flat as possible on the floor.
- Lengthen your spine all the way down to your tailbone and avoid lifting your hips.
- Don't forget to breathe nice and deep in a controlled manner to release any tension
- Hold this post for 30 seconds to a minute and then repeat on the other leg
- Do this exercise 2-3 times per leg around 1-3 times a day



\* Image from tennis-conditioning.com

**Second stretch:** Childs pose –This is a traditional yoga pose which works your Hamstrings, Gluteus Maximus (Glutes) and most importantly the Spinal Extensors. Performing this pose will help to relieve pain and tension as well as promoting flexibility and increased blood circulation in the lower back.

**How to perform the Childs Pose stretch:**

- Place your hands and knees on the ground so that you are in an 'all fours' stance
- Sink back through your hips to rest them on your heels
- Rest your stomach on your thighs
- Extend your arms either outstretched in front of you with your palms down or alongside your body with palms up.
- Don't forget to breathe again to relax and free off any areas of tension
- Hold this pose for up to 1 minute. You can do it several times throughout the day



\*Image from gaia.com

## **6. Strengthen your core**

Most people with chronic back pain would benefit from stronger abdominal muscles. When your abdominal muscles are weak all the other muscles around them will need to work extra hard to “pick up the slack” and compensate for them which can lead to muscle overload and then back pain.

When the abdominal muscles are strengthened, it often reduces the strain on the lower back.

An improved core will also improve your posture. This is important because a “poor posture” puts unnecessary strain on the back which eventually leads to injury.

Below are two exercises specifically targeted to strengthen your core.

### **First Exercise**

The first exercise is a simple abdominal crunch. This is a classic core exercise which will strengthen your abdominal muscles which will help improve posture and give your lower back more support. To perform the abdominal crunch exercise, follow along.

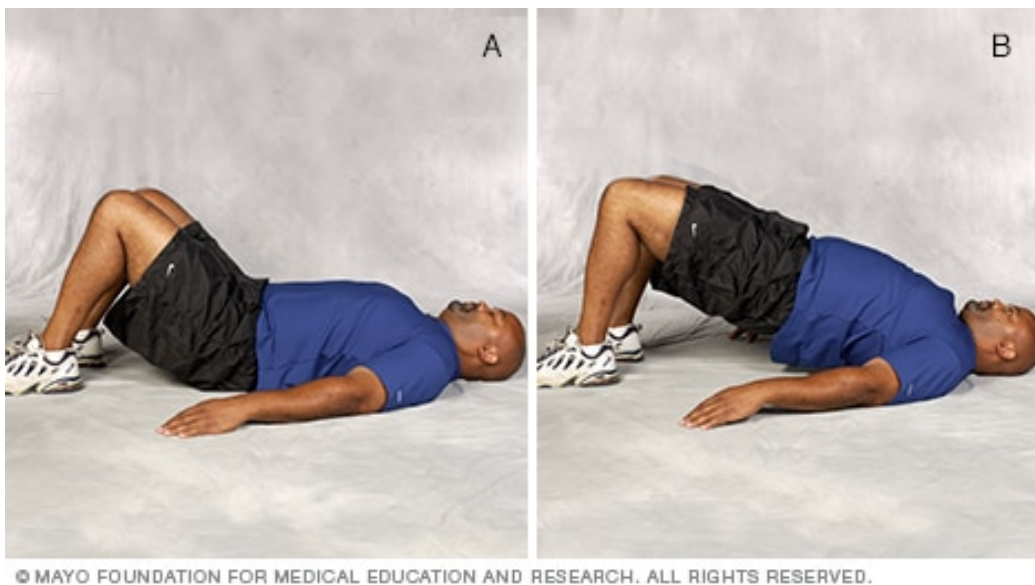
- Lie on your back with your feet on a wall so that your knees and hips are bent at a 90 degree angle. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
- Raise your head and shoulders off of the floor. To prevent yourself from straining your neck, cross your arms on your chest rather than locking them behind your head like you would in a traditional sit up. Hold the crunch for 3 deep breaths.
- Return to the starting position and repeat for 2-3 sets of 5-10 reps



### **Second Exercise**

The next exercise is known as the 'Bridge'. This is a great exercise to aid in strengthening the core as it uses several muscles in combination. This is how to perform the bridge exercise:

- Lie on your back with your knees bent, keeping your back in a neutral position and not pressed in to the floor. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
- Raise your hips off of the floor until your hips are aligned with your knees and shoulders. Hold this position for 3 deep breaths.
- Return to the starting position and repeat for 2-3 sets of 5-10 reps



## 7. Improve your posture

While your pain may have started after a heavy session at the gym, a long day gardening or after a shift at your desk-based job, ultimately the strain that caused it has probably been silently building for years.

As stated before, poor posture leads to an increased chance of back injury due to unnecessary strain placed on your back. For example, you can increase the pressure on your back by 50% simply by leaning over the sink incorrectly to brush your teeth.

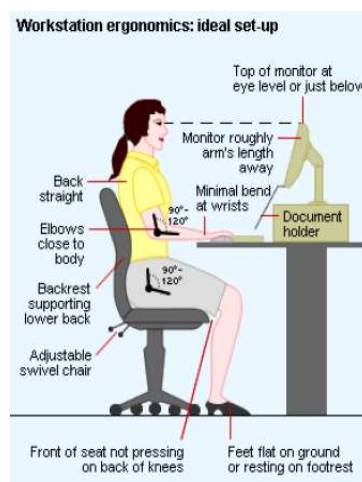
Some quick tips on posture are as follows:

Avoid slouching in chairs! While slouching doesn't always cause discomfort, over time this position can place strain on already sensitised muscles and soft tissues. This strain can increase muscle tension and in turn cause lower back pain. Try to get in to the habit of sitting 'correctly' by sitting upright, feet planted on the floor with at around 90 degrees.

Straighten up! A great way to prevent posture problems is by Standing up tall. You'll feel better and look better. To do this, pretend you're standing against a wall to measure your height. Hold your head straight and tuck in your chin. Your ears should be over the middle of your shoulders. Stand with your shoulders back, knees straight, and belly tucked in. Straighten up so you feel like your head stretches toward the sky.

Try and take the strain off of your back while performing standing household chores. One of the more common complaints that people suffer with at home when it comes to back pain is leaning over the sink when doing the dishes or brushing your teeth. A handy way around this is to open the cabinet door below the sink (if you have one) and place one foot inside it. Failing this if you keep a small stool by the sink this will also work nicely. Doing this allows you to use your hips for support and lean forward without bending the spine too much.

If you work in an office setting, make sure your place of employment has undertaken an ergonomic workstation assessment to ensure that you are able to sit comfortably at your desk without too much risk to your posture or health. If your work has not done this or will not do it then see the image below on how to best set up your work or home desk so you can have better posture and less back pain.



## 8. Save your back, lift with your legs

I'm sure you have heard it before. Lift with your legs, not with your back to avoid injury. But is the age old advice actually true? The short answer is, yes. Most back injuries are in some way related to improper lifting or attempting to lift something that is too heavy. While you don't injure your back every time you 'lift wrong', back injuries are usually a result of long term wear and tear and improper lifting technique can be the straw that breaks the camel's back.

Lifting from your legs gives you the stability and power you need to move heavier objects without hurting your back. This doesn't mean that your back is no longer involved in lifting as your back is involved in your core, which is involved in nearly every move we make.

The key when lifting is to:  
Engage your core, keeping your abs pulled in.

Avoid overly curling or hunching your back as you lift and when you do lift, try to avoid twisting in the same movement.

Keep the weight close to your body to not shift your centre of gravity and cause your back to have to engage to stop you toppling.

Feel what's working. When you lift with your legs you should feel them doing the work whereas lifting with your back you will feel the back muscle pulling or straining.



© Healthwise, Incorporated

\*image from myhealth.alberta.ca

## 9. Adjust your driving position

There are two main reasons why driving impacts your back. Poor posture and being in a fixed position for an extended period of time.

Anyone that spends a decent amount of time behind the wheel every day will suffer with some back pain, whether it's for your long commute or just dropping the kids off to school daily.

Here are some helpful tips to avoid back pain while driving:

Adjust your seats back rest so that it makes contact from your bottom up to your shoulders. Reclining your seat too far back will make you strain your head and neck forward and put strain on your lower back.

Move the steering wheel up or down to find a position that is most comfortable for you and slide your seat forwards or back so that your elbows are at a 90 degree angle or slightly more if you are adopting the 10 and 2 hand position

Position yourself so the bottom of your back is firmly against the seat so that the natural 'S' shaped curve of the spine is properly supported

Try to ensure that your seat supports the length of your thighs comfortably and is not putting any pressure behind your knees, cutting off circulation

-If your job involves lifting items in and out of your car/van try to remember what we spoke about in point 8. Ensure that your back is straight and that you bend and lift from your knees. This will reduce strain on your back.



## **10. Get help from your local osteopath!**

Have you suffered with Lower back pain for weeks or months, with no sign of relief in sight?

If you have made no progress no matter the amount of rest, stretches or exercises you do and are losing hope in finding that one thing that will 'cure' your pain, then I have some brilliant news for you.

Your local Osteopath can have an immediate impact on your pain and health, thus dramatically improving your lifestyle. Your local osteopaths pride their selves on taking a 'holistic' view on your pain and treatment meaning that as well at treating your pain they will also take an active approach to your rehab outside of the clinic by looking at your lifestyle and help find what could be causing the back pain or making it worse.

At Gibbons Therapy Osteopathic Clinics, we help people keep active, mobile, free from painkillers and out of the doctor's office.

Our aim is to relieve your pain and get you moving freely as quickly as possible by helping you to become the "expert" in treating your lower back pain. We do this by approaching our treatments as education based where each individual patient is the focus. With that in mind we created this e-book to get you help and ease your back pain as soon as possible whilst also proving the value of education.

We know you might have questions outside of what is covered in this e-book and will be looking for more answers. You can reach out to us at any time with specific questions. Just send us an email at [Gibbonstherapy@gmail.com](mailto:Gibbonstherapy@gmail.com) or call 01277 650010

We get lots of calls from people suffering with lower back pain and are glad to help in any way we can.

I hope this e-book has been of use to you!

Sincerely

**Thomas Gibbons, M.Ost**

Osteopath & Owner of Gibbons Therapy Osteopathic Clinic

[www.gibbonstherapy.com](http://www.gibbonstherapy.com)

[www.billericayosteopath.co.uk](http://www.billericayosteopath.co.uk)

## **Health Disclaimer**

Every effort has been made to correctly portray the health advice given in this report. The content of this report is not intended to be used as a replacement or substitute for care from an Osteopath or other health care professional. If you experience signs or symptoms of injury, disease or illness you should seek the advice from your osteopath or other health professional.

The information in this report is provided for educational & informational purposes only and is not a substitute for the advice, diagnosis or treatment of a health care professional nor is it a suggestion or replacement for a course of treatment for a particular individual

**Individuals should always consult a health care professional for answers to questions regarding personal health.**

It is impossible for us to give a completely accurate medical diagnosis without an in person, comprehensive physical assessment of your symptoms & conditions at one of our locations. Advice given for a specific injury can't be perfectly accurate to your specific condition and should be taken as general advice and not a specific individualized plan of care. No guarantees of specific results are expressly made or implied in this report. If you would like a full comprehensive evaluation to tailor advice specific to your case please schedule an osteopathic appointment at the Gibbons Therapy Clinic