



Zoe Birch is a Chartered Physiotherapist and founder of PhysioMotion, which operate three London clinics as well as providing physiotherapy at home. We're pleased to publish her third article for **SEBRA NEWS W2** and this time round Zoe discusses a subject that almost everyone will relate to.

MYTHS IN BACK PAIN

MYTH #2

"The way I stand or sit is causing my back pain"

Society has made us believe that there is a perfect posture that we must adapt to otherwise we are putting ourselves at risk of damage.

Peter O'Sullivan and his team have been researching the truth behind this and they have found that there is no one posture that is superior over another and also that there is not a posture that we should be avoiding.

They have suggested that you should adopt a comfortable, relaxed posture that suits you in both sitting and standing, and also to vary our posture and move in a confident, relaxed and variable manner.

Additionally there is no evidence that lifting in a particular way or bracing the core will reduce your likelihood of back pain or injury. Bracing your core constantly has actually shown to increase muscle tension and reduce flexibility in your spine resulting in increased levels of pain.

The spine is a robust and adaptable structure that is capable to safely move and be loaded in a variety of postures. A reason for back pain after lifting could be due to lifting something awkwardly or heavier than usual resulting in a muscle strain.

MYTH #3

"Exercise makes my back pain worse"

When you are initially suffering with back pain, you don't want to move. If you continue this for a prolonged period, this can actually result in higher levels of pain, greater disability and poorer recovery.

WHAT IS CAUSING MY LOWER BACK PAIN?

There can be lots of reasons for lower back pain and in this article I will discuss some of the common myths.

An episode of back pain during your lifetime is normal and most people will recover from it within three months.

The most common causes for non-traumatic lower back pain can be due to physical, environmental, emotional or biological influences on your body, and will typically be a combination of all of them.

When treating back pain, we first must work out what are the contributing factors and how we can address them to help you manage your back pain.

MYTH #1

"My MRI says that my bulging disc is the cause of my back pain"

Commonly scans are performed by your doctor to find a physical reason for your lower back pain.

However, there are many changes in your spine that will show up on these scans in the absence of pain, something discovered by a researcher called Savage in 1997.

His team found that 'there was not a clear relationship between the MRI appearance of the lumbar spine and lower back pain. 32% of subjects without pain had 'abnormal' lumbar spines and 47% of all the subjects who had experienced lower back pain had 'normal' lumbar spines'.

Therefore back pain is not always an indication of spinal damage or injury.



For a few days avoiding aggravating activities may be helpful to relieve your pain. Then it is important to increase your normal activity levels gradually. Your muscles can ache after increased activity, but don't worry this is normal and doesn't indicate harm or damage.

There is no one type of exercise that is superior to another, it should be something that you enjoy and is convenient for you.

Research shows that regular exercise helps not only to keep your body fit and healthy, but reduces pain and discomfort. Other health benefits are relaxing muscle tension, improving mood and strengthening your immune system.

These are just three myths associated with back pain, if you want to know about others or understand pain more, a great website is www.pain-ed.com.

**Disclaimer- If you have a persistent musculoskeletal problems or injury, please seek medical advice.*

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