

A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a green long-sleeved shirt and green pants, is shown from the back, stretching her back by pulling her arms behind her head. The background is a blurred office setting with a desk and a laptop.

*Leave*  
**BACK**

**PAIN**

*behind*

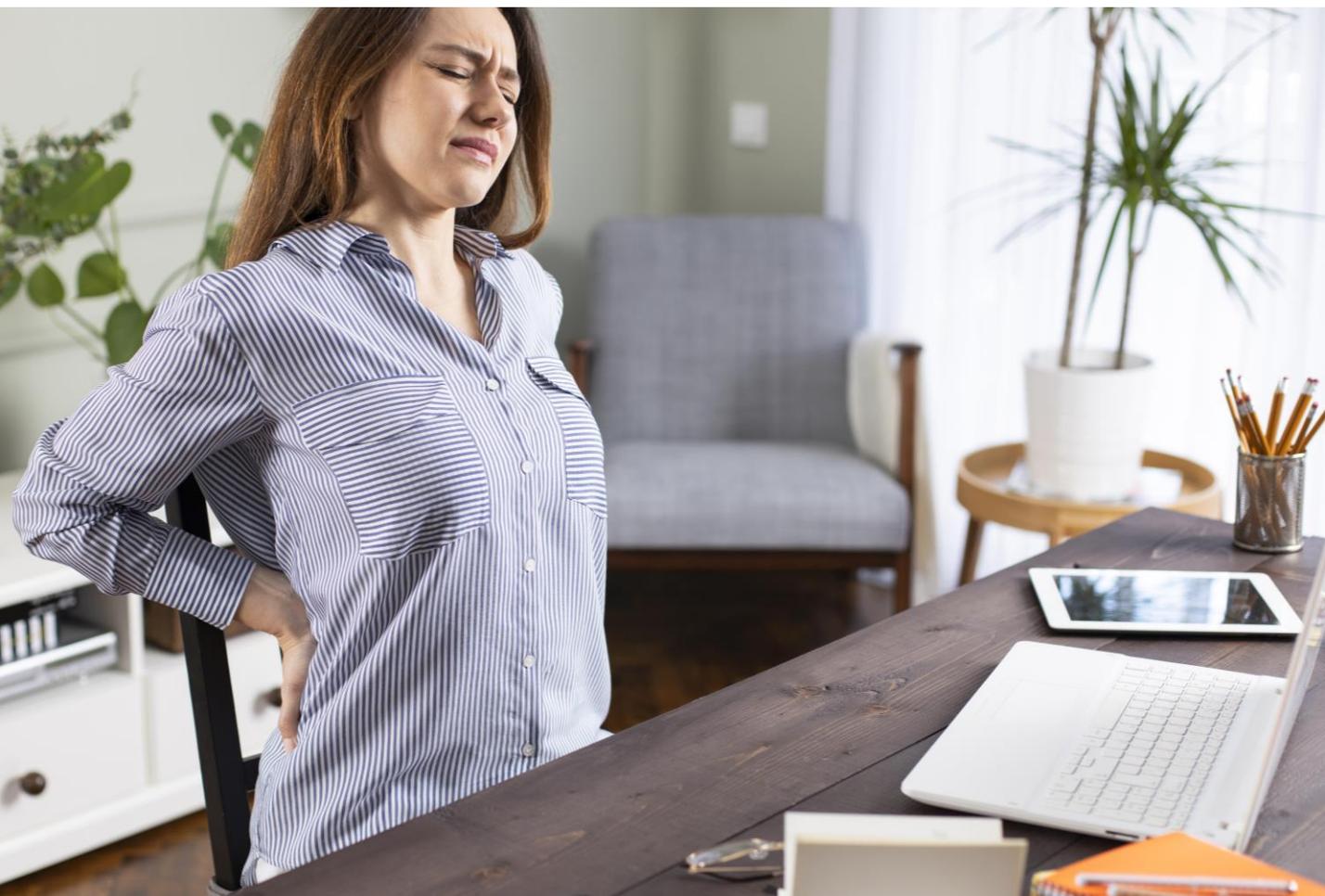


According to the NHS, it is estimated that up to 8 in every 10 people in the UK are affected by back pain at some point in their lives. Back pain affects people's general well-being, reduces their productivity, as well as it prevents many of them from engaging in everyday activities. Also, it is the single leading cause of disability and the top common causes of absence from work. According to the latest [Health and Safety's Work-related musculoskeletal disorder statistics report](#), an estimated 6.9 million working days were lost due to back pain. Therefore, the prevention of back pain in the workplace and an early intervention when back problems start is crucial in reduction of sick leave among employees due to musculoskeletal disorders.

# WORKING FROM HOME IS TAKING A TOLL ON OUR BACKS

During the COVID-19 pandemic millions of people started working from home, which has led to increased reports of back and neck pain. We all have faced the new challenge of creating a home office, converting a room at home - maybe a bedroom or dining room, to become our substitute workspace. Improper workstation, bad posture, lack of physical activity, as well as excessive stress all contributed to back and neck problems that many of us are still experiencing.

Back pain can be often prevented so it's important to consider the risk factors of developing a musculoskeletal disorder. If both the employee and the employer are aware of causes of back pain, they can take steps to reduce this risk and minimise disruption to work and home life.



# WHAT CAN EMPLOYERS DO TO SUPPORT THEIR EMPLOYEES?

- Perform risk assessments to try to identify the potential sources of back pain in the working environment and establish safer systems of work. General advice on how to carry out a risk assessment is contained in the [HSE \(GB\) risk assessment document](#).
- Provide information, training and supervision on manual handling and safe ways to work. Click [here](#) to see a brief guide on manual handling at work.
- Consult regularly with the employees on their health and wellbeing to help identify concerns or developing trends.
- Provide training and encourage employees to stay active and stretch regularly in order to prevent back pain from striking. Through our partner services we offer various **workshops** and **webinars** in which employees can learn some simple and effective stretching and strengthening exercises.



- Provide safe equipment to assist your employees in their duties.
- For employees suffering from back pain, provide an access to physiotherapy services that will help them learn more about their condition and the best treatment. Through our partner services we offer **physiotherapy**, where employees can be diagnosed and receive a personalised exercise and recovery programme.
- Ensure employees' workstations are set up properly in order to avoid exacerbating existing medical conditions or potentially creating new issues. At Corazon Health we offer **Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessments**, which involve assessing the risk involved with using screens in a working environment and making specific recommendations for an employee.



# WHAT CAN EMPLOYEES DO TO REDUCE THE RISK OF DEVELOPING BACK PAIN?



## **STAYING ACTIVE**

Being active is one of the best ways to help prevent and manage most back pain. Choose an exercise/activity you enjoy doing but make sure the type and intensity of your activity is appropriate for your level of fitness. You should aim to be physically active every day. One of the recommended exercises for preventing back pain is swimming, as the water environment takes the strain off joints and muscles while working out the entire body. Also, you could try Yoga or Pilates, as they can strengthen core and back muscles, increase flexibility, as well as promote good posture.

## **MAINTAINING HEALTHY WEIGHT**

Being overweight can increase your risk of developing back pain. The spine is designed to carry the body's weight and distribute the loads encountered during rest and activity. When excess weight is carried, the spine is forced to assimilate the burden, which can lead to structural compromise and damage. Therefore, it's important to keep a healthy weight to avoid excessive load on your spine.



## IMPROVING POSTURE

Correct posture is a simple but very important way to keep the many intricate structures in the back and spine healthy. Your spine is strong and stable when you practice healthy posture. When you have a poor posture, e.g., when you slouch or stoop, your muscles and ligaments strain to keep you balanced which in consequence can lead to back pain. Therefore, being aware of your posture when standing, sitting or walking can help protect the back.

## TAKING REGURAL BREAKS

Being in the same position and using the same muscles for a long time can lead to the feeling of being tense and achy. While working you should take a brief break every 30 to 60 minutes. During this break, stand up, move around, stretch or grab a drink. This will allow you to rest and exercise different muscles, which will help to feel less tensed.

## STRETCHING REGULARLY

Stretching regularly can reduce your discomfort and tension in muscles supporting the spine. It can also improve the range of motion and overall mobility, as well as reduce the risk of disability caused by back pain. Try to incorporate stretches in your daily routine, for example when you get out of bed. It's important that you stretch safely and with care. Be mindful of your body's limits and don't push your body into difficult or painful positions. Listen to your body and do what feels best for you in each moment. Have a look at some of these stretching exercises that may help you to reduce discomfort in your muscles: [Back Stretches](#), [Pilates for chronic back pain](#), [Exercises for back pain](#)



## CONTACT US

Please contact us for more information on our services to find out how we can help your employees,.

Telephone: +44 (0)1223 834404  
Email: [sales@corazonhealth.co.uk](mailto:sales@corazonhealth.co.uk)

## REFERENCES

[BackCare](#)

[NHS](#)

[HSE](#)

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