

Key statistics about back pain

Back pain is one of the most common health problems in the UK. Below we explore key statistics, as well as preventative measures to help reduce your risk.

60%

...of the adult population are **expected to have lower back pain** at some point in their life.

1.

Referrals for spinal surgery are increasing year on year.

Back pain is the **largest single cause of disability** in the UK.

2.

£10 billion

...is the **cost of back pain** to the UK economy.

3.

More than
40%

...of those living with a **long-term musculoskeletal condition** are physically inactive.

4.



Smokers and ex-smokers experience **114% increase** in disabling lower back pain.

70%

...of those living with a **long-term musculoskeletal condition** are **overweight or obese**.

Preventative measures to reduce risk of back pain

- ✓ Break up long periods of being in the same position with movements i.e. standing up or stretching.
- ✓ When working at a desk, check your display screen equipment (DSE) is setup correctly.
- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight and balanced diet.
- ✓ Regular exercise and strengthening exercises for major muscle groups.
- ✓ When lifting heavy objects keep knees bent and back straight.

Back pain is one of the biggest causes of work absences.

>12m

...**working days are lost** each year due to back pain.

5.



A study found **81% of desk workers** had experienced back, neck or shoulder pain after switching to working from home in lockdown.

Out of these

25%

...were affected often or all of the time.

6.

For further support visit [NHS](#), [BackCare](#) and [Versus Arthritis](#).