



# Osteoarthritis Back Pain

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## Learning to Manage Lower Back Pain

Osteoarthritis is known for causing severe back pain, especially within the lower lumbar region. The pain can be debilitating and depressing, but there is hope. Learning how to manage your osteoarthritis and back pain can greatly improve the quality of your life and reduce the number of bad days you have. With the right treatment methods, you can improve your symptoms and start enjoying life once again.

### Why Does Osteoarthritis Cause Back Pain?

Osteoarthritis is one of the only types of arthritis that causes pain within the back. This pain is due to bone loss in the back that causes high levels of inflammation and allows the bones to fracture easily. In addition to bone degeneration, patients often experience loss of cartilage within the lower back region, causing pain to escalate. The cartilage in your back degenerates over time even without osteoarthritis, but it progresses rapidly when this condition is present.

### What Can I Do About Osteoarthritis Back Pain?

- **Keep Moving** – If you suffer from back pain due to osteoarthritis, one of the worst things you can do is remain idle, as the less you move the harder it will be to move. Inactivity can actually cause the problem to get worse as time goes on. Keep active with gentle exercise for osteoarthritis.
- **Treat Your Mind** – While treating the body is an important part of treatment, the mind is connected and must also be treated to achieve sustainable pain relief. Relaxation techniques like guided imagery, the process of calming the mind and body by picturing positive words and phrases, have been shown to be effective. Guided imagery involves a meditation-like state that allows the body to heal. When you're sleeping your body can heal itself, and that process is replicated through guided imagery. There are CDs and online videos you can use to guide you through the process.
- **Heat therapy** – Heat can help to reduce the inflammation and swelling that is causing your pain. Try taking a warm bath or using a heating pad on your back where the pain is radiating from.
- **Biofeedback therapy** – During a biofeedback therapy session, electrodes are attached to your skin to monitor your body's activity, including vital signs, muscle activity and temperature. The results the electrodes collect show up on a screen, allowing you to see your response to stress, and therefore begin to learn to control it. The biofeedback therapist will help you to relax and control your body by slowing your heart rate and relaxing your muscles. Muscle tension in the back causes an increase in pain, and by learning how to relax the muscles in your body, you can relieve some of your symptoms during a flare up.

### Conclusion

If you suffer from osteoarthritis back pain and are looking for alternatives to medication, give some of these methods a try. They have provided many patients with the relief they've been seeking.