**Improve back health in your workplace for a healthier team**

Back Care Awareness Week is taking place from 3 to 7 October. Most of us will develop back pain at some point in our lives. Now’s the time to understand what we can do to manage back pain and help prevent it from happening in the first place.

At <company name>, we want to make sure your work environment supports your health. Whether it’s standing or sitting for too long, it’s important to be aware of the causes of back pain, and where to get support if you need it.

**Symptoms of back pain**

The symptoms of back pain can vary from person to person, and the pain can range from mild to very severe. It may come on suddenly, after you’ve lifted something heavy or moved in a way that’s hurt your back. Some people get a dull pain in their back, while others describe it as more of a tearing or burning pain.

It can also come on gradually over time or for no clear reason.

**Preventing back pain**There are lots of things you can do to help reduce your risk of getting back pain. It can help to do the following:

- Get plenty of exercise

- Take care with lifting and carrying heavy items

- Keep a good posture

- Move regularly

Here’s what Judith Smith, Clinical Services Manager and Advanced MSK Physiotherapy Practitioner at Bupa, has to say:

Back pain is one of the most common musculoskeletal problems that people will experience in their lifetime, with most of us experiencing it at some point. Most back pain is usually a short-term problem that will resolve quickly (within 6 weeks). But, there is lots we can do to help ourselves and minimise effect on our daily lives.

This toolkit provides advice on how to prevent or manage simple back pain, including when to seek professional advice if things are not starting to improve quickly.

As an employer we can also encourage a healthier workforce by supporting healthy work environments and practices. Try simple things like encouraging standing or walking meetings, and having lunch and desk breaks. You can also stay active throughout the day with simple desk-based stretches and movements.

**When to see a doctor**

In most people, back pain improves in a few weeks. However, if your pain doesn’t improve or it’s interfering with how you carry out your daily activities, speak to a doctor for further advice.

**Where to get support with back pain**

There are lots of things you can do yourself to help relieve your back pain and recover faster. For example, exercise plays a key role in strengthening your back muscles and keeping your spine mobile. You can find a range of back care support, advice and guidance on the health information area of Bupa's website: <https://www.bupa.co.uk/health-information>.

It’s good to know you can get fast advice from a Bupa physiotherapist for your back pain, if you need it. Speak with <relevant manager/HR representative> to see what’s available to you.

If you’re a manager, learn how you can [support your team’s muscle, bone and joint health](https://www.bupa.co.uk/~/media/files/mms/bins-06200.pdf).

Learn about the link between your [back health and emotional wellbeing](https://www.bupa.co.uk/newsroom/ourviews/psychological-support-lower-back-pain) and see how else you can [look after your back](https://www.bupa.co.uk/newsroom/ourviews/back-care). You can also visit the [Back Care Awareness Week website](https://backcare.org.uk/event/2022-back-care-awareness-week/) for more support.