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**W**early 80 percent of Americans will suffer from back pain at some point in their life. Back pain is a leading cause of days missed at work and has now become the most common physical disability.


Most back pain will resolve in six to 12 weeks with or without treatment. However, it is important to remember that not all back pain is caused by muscle or nerve conditions. Please see a physician if your back pain persists for several days. Low back pain can cause a change in your posture, walking or the way you move. It can further worsen the problem or cause new problems.

Factors that contribute to chronic back pain include injury, arthritis and sports such as running and golf. Emotional stress and worry can also contribute to back pain. An inactive lifestyle is just as likely to cause or contribute to low back pain as a traumatic injury or arthritis.

What should you do if you develop back pain? It is best to take something for the pain and stay as active as you can without aggravating your pain. Bed rest is no longer recommended for back pain. Gently work through the pain and restore your body to health. See a physician immediately if you feel your back pain may be caused by a serious medical condition.

If your back pain persists consider seeing a Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation physician also known as a physiatrist. Physiatrists are medical doctors with special training in non-surgical treatments for back pain. A physiatrist can develop an individual treatment plan for your back pain. The goal is quicker recovery and fewer days missed from work.

Visit [www.aapmr.org](http://www.aapmr.org) to learn more about how a physiatrist can help you.

Test your back health IQ—visit the *American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* and take their quiz at [aapmr.org/condtreat/lbpquiz/lbpquiz.htm](http://aapmr.org/condtreat/lbpquiz/lbpquiz.htm) 

# Back Pain