Week 1

# Subject: *Beating Back Pain*: Protecting Your Back from Injury

Welcome to our *Beating Back Pain!* campaign. Your back is strong in many ways, but fragile in others. Lower back pain is a major cause of lost work time.[[1]](#footnote-1) It can even be disabling. That’s why we want to share information from medical experts on steps you can take to protect your back.

What does low back pain feel like? It may be a constant, uncomfortable ache or a sudden, sharp pain. It may gradually disappear or feel worse over time. You may not even be aware that you hurt your back–yet, suddenly, you’re in pain.

Back injuries can be difficult to diagnose and to treat, and recovery can take a long time. That’s why it’s important to do everything you can to protect your back. We’ll be sharing some great ideas that you can incorporate into your daily life.

Here are a few simple changes you can make to help protect your back:[[2]](#footnote-2)

* Move more. Even 10 seconds of movement and stretching is better than sitting still
* Avoid sleeping on your stomach
* Stand with your weight equally distributed on both of your feet
* Stretch. In particular, stretching your hamstrings can provide relief across your lower back
* Don’t wear worn out shoes or flip flops

Watch for more information about preventing lower back pain. If you have any back issues, even if they seem mild, be sure to discuss them with your doctor.

Week 2

# Subject: *Beating Back Pain*: Ouch! What’s Causing My Back Pain?

Last week we launched the *Beating Back Pain!* campaign. Our goal is to provide useful information that may keep you from suffering unnecessary back problems. We’ll also share some of the latest treatment options from the medical community.

It may seem strange, but the origins of back pain can be difficult to diagnose. Here are some examples of origins of back pain, some of which may surprise you:2

* Being a weekend warrior (enjoying sports or exercising only on the weekends)
* Wearing certain shoes such as stilettos, flip-flops or overly-worn shoes
* Constantly feeling stressed and tense
* Hovering over laptops, tablets and smartphones

Don’t risk an incapacitating injury if you can take steps to protect your back. In addition, don’t hesitate to consult your doctor if you’re experiencing any back pain.

Week 3

# Subject: Back Pain Treatment Myths

You have an ache in your lower back. You try to ignore it, hoping it will go away. But it’s getting worse. What should you do?

There are many common misconceptions about how to treat lower back pain. Here are some of them:

## Lying Down

You may have been told that lying down is the best way to soothe an aching back, but moving may actually be better for your back.[[3]](#footnote-3) Gentle (not jarring) movement, like walking, can help loosen stiff muscles. It can stimulate blood flow, which carries nutrients and oxygen to the back.3

## Surgery is Your Best Bet

Surgery is not always the best treatment for alleviating back pain. According to the World Health Organization, surgery is often unjustifiable and may provide temporary relief.[[4]](#footnote-4) There are many non-invasive treatment options available like physical therapy and therapeutic massage that may have better outcomes for low back pain patients.[[5]](#footnote-5),[[6]](#footnote-6) In a study, researchers discovered long-term improvements in patients who had surgery weren’t better when compared to patients who underwent non-invasive treatments for back pain.[[7]](#footnote-7) Working with your healthcare provider, you can explore non-invasive therapies before opting for surgery.

## Fight through the Pain

Don’t ignore or try to fight through the pain. Lower back pain can start out as a minor problem, but it can become chronic over time. A chronic condition is persistent or recurring and can be difficult to treat. It’s also possible that lower back pain might be a symptom of an underlying medical condition, such as kidney stones.[[8]](#footnote-8) Check with your doctor, and take the time to find a therapy that alleviates your pain safely.

Watch for more information about preventing lower back pain in our *Beating Back Pain!* awareness campaign.

1. The World Health Organization, “Priority Medicines for Europe and the World,” March 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, "Back Pain Fact Sheet,” December 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Annals Internal Medicine, “Diagnosis and Treatment of Low Back Pain: A Joint Clinical Practice Guideline from the American College of Physicians and the American Pain Society,” October 2007 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Bulletin of the World Health Organization, “Low back pain,” 2003 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care, “Exercise and physiotherapy for chronic low back pain,” December 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Annals of Internal Medicine, “A review of the evidence for the effectiveness, safety, and cost of acupuncture, massage therapy, and spinal manipulation for back pain,” June 2003 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases, “Four-year follow-up of surgical versus non-surgical therapy for chronic low back pain,” July 2009 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, "Back Pain Fact Sheet,” December 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)