

Getting rid of the ache * By the numbers

By: Terri Dougherty

A back problem can be a sharp pain that appears suddenly or a persistent dull ache that just won't go away. The way it's treated generally depends on how long the pain lasts.

Acute, or short-term, pain lasts for a few weeks and often gets better on its own. Pain relievers such as acetaminophen, aspirin, or ibuprofen can be helpful.

To relieve stiffness and ease pain, it also helps to limit bed rest and begin moving as soon as possible.

Treatment for chronic back pain, which lasts for longer than three months, ranges from hot and cold packs to physical therapy, medications, or surgery. A medical professional can help determine which options are best.



The back is complex, and it can be difficult to pinpoint the cause of pain. Always check with your doctor if severe pain persists or other symptoms appear, such as numbness, tingling, weakness, fever, or loss of bowel control.

By the Numbers

About **4 out of 5** adults have lower back pain at some point in their life.

Costs associated with lower back pain exceed **\$100 billion** each year.

Sources: National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, Journal of the American Osteopathic Association

