

# Article: Physical Health—musculoskeletal

*Content notes:*

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AUDIENCE	Working-age super fund members and employers looking to understand back pain risk factors and take preventative action through lifestyle and workplace changes.
COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES	White-label content tied to World Health & Safety at Work Day (April) or National Safe Work Month (October), positioning back pain as largely preventable through simple lifestyle and ergonomic changes.
MESSAGE	Back pain is extremely common but many of the key risk factors are within your control, from weight and posture to exercise, stress and workplace setup.
INSIGHTS	About 4 million Australians have back pain on any given day, and modifiable risk factors like being overweight, smoking, inactivity and poor posture play a significant role.
ASSOCIATED ASSET/S	TAL Health Connector, SafeWork NSW sedentary work resources.
CTA	Speak to your GP about managing your back pain risk factors or find support through the TAL Health Connector.
REVIEW DATE	May 2026

## 6 ways to help prevent back pain

**[DURING APR]** World Health & Safety at Work Day on 28th April is a great time for a refresh on the simple steps you can take to help protect your back and prevent lower back pain. If you’d like to know more, our life insurance partner TAL, has provided some useful guidance on the steps you can take.

**[DURING OCTOBER]** National Safe Work Month in October is a great time for a refresh on the simple steps you can take to help protect your back and prevent lower back pain. If you’d like to know more, our life insurance partner TAL, has provided some useful guidance on the steps you can take.

**[ALL YEAR]** There are some simple steps you can take to help protect your back and prevent lower back pain. If you’d like to know more, our life insurance partner TAL, has provided some useful guidance on the steps you can take.

About 4 million Australians have back pain on any one day, so it’s a very common problem.<sup>1</sup> There is a large spectrum of types of back pain ranging from mild to severe and lasting a few days to several years. Even short lived and milder pain can have a significant impact on daily life. The good news is that there are many simple things you can do to reduce your risk factors and your chances of developing back pain in the future.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). *Chronic musculoskeletal conditions*. 2024

Some risk factors we cannot change such as older age, a family history of degenerative disc disease and some diseases such as arthritis and cancer. However, there are some risk factors associated with back pain which we can change, such as being overweight, smoking, a lack of exercise, occupational hazards, poor posture and stress.

## 1. Weight loss

Being overweight increases the weight and stress being put through the lower back and other joints. People with a BMI above 30 are at increased risk of lower back pain so keeping your weight down not only benefits your overall health, but your back health as well.

## 2. Quit smoking

Together with having overall negative impact on your health, smoking is linked to musculoskeletal conditions including lower back pain, neck pain, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis. It causes fatigue and impacts blood flow, slowing healing.

## 3. Regular exercise & movement

People who regularly exercise are less likely to develop back pain and recover more quickly if it does occur. Any type of physical activity and regular movement will help, but walking, running, swimming, yoga, Pilates or core training are particularly useful. It's important to choose a form of exercise that you enjoy and can work into your regular schedule a few times a week.

## 4. Ergonomic practices at work

If you work in an office, ensure that you take regular breaks from your desk and review your desk set up to make sure it's ergonomically supportive. If you perform physical tasks at work, such as lifting, make sure that you utilise appropriate equipment and use good lifting practices. Your work, health and safety team will be able to assist.

## 5. Improving your posture

Try to maintain a good posture and avoid slouching when seated or standing. Hunching over handheld electronic devices for prolonged periods can negatively impact posture, so ensure you take a break and move around.

## 6. Reducing stress

Stress can play a big part in lower back pain, especially chronic pain. It can cause changes in posture, activity levels and increase muscle tension. Addressing stress triggers, together with regular exercise can help manage stress-related back pain.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, or unsure where to begin, speak to your GP or find support through the [TAL Health Connector](#).

DISCLAIMER [please add to your post]

(Fund to insert any disclaimer)

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