

Upper Back Pain

People don't talk about upper back pain very often. Yet it can be just as crippling as lower back pain. In most cases the underlying causes are not serious. However, when it occurs, upper back pain can cause a level of discomfort that's too misery-making to ignore.

Upper back pain is usually aggravated by moving the head or the arms, and can radiate out along the edge of the ribs. It can also cause headaches or aching pain in the neck and shoulders.

The causes of upper back pain can vary from poor posture or trauma, to improper lifting or carrying heavy objects.

One of the most unexpected causes of upper back pain is sneezing! Yes, the common sneeze can cause excruciating pain in the upper back. It's very easy to blame back pain on lifting heavy things like children, concrete, shopping or piles of washing, but sometimes our own bodily functions can be the cause of the problem.

Self-help things you can do if your upper back is painful:

Rest: Avoid activities that exacerbate the pain for a day or two.

Sleep: Try to make sure you get some good sleep.

Watch your posture: When you're sitting keep your head in a neutral position with your ears directly over your shoulders. This significantly reduces the amount of stress on your neck and back.

Be careful: Don't try to stretch through serious pain – the chances are you will aggravate it!

As always the effect of any remedy will vary from person to person. Try to figure out what works best for you. And don't do the things that make it worse!

Other causes of upper back pain may include osteoporosis (where the bones are weakened) and scoliosis (where the spine isn't straight, but in an "S" or "C" curve when viewed from the back). So if the pain doesn't subside get your back checked – it's not clever to ignore the pain.