



Back Pain and Lifting

At the Wye Physiotherapy Practice we see more people complaining of back pain than anything else.

Back pain can commonly be caused by poor methods of lifting, especially in the home situation.

Preparation is the key. The basic rules for safe lifting are as follows:

1. Feet to be firmly placed apart, and facing the direction you are moving.
2. Bend the knees.
3. Keep your back straight and gently brace tummy muscles before lifting.
4. Avoid twisting movements with your back. Move feet instead.
5. Hold object close to you and keep elbows tucked tightly into your side.

Common situations in the home can strain your back. For example, housework. Here are a few simple suggestions to avoid overstraining:

1. Making the bed: - Try kneeling or squatting to tuck in sheets or blankets.
2. Hovering: - Keep your back straight, bend the knees and use extension pieces with a cylinder vacuum to avoid over reaching.
3. Work surfaces: - Unfortunately these tend to be of a standard height. If they are too low for you, either sit down or place your work at a higher level e.g. on a box.
4. Adjust your ironing board to the correct height.

If you have a baby or toddler, try these top tips at home.

When lifting a baby from the cot put the cot side down and get close to the cot. Bend your knees so that you are almost level with the mattress. Lift your baby towards you and do not straighten your knees until the baby is in your arms.

When lifting a toddler from the floor, squat or kneel down first. Don't stop. As soon as the child is old enough, encourage him to come close to you and hug you while you straighten your knees to lift.

If your child wants a cuddle try sitting down in an armchair and encourage him to climb up onto your lap.

Don't forget, if your backache persists, it is advisable to consult your Doctor for medical advice or a physiotherapist.