



*Musculoskeletal*

## Low back pain reduction: the patient's perspective

What patients think reduces their low back pain.

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There is a vast amount of research focusing on the efficacy of various strategies to reduce low back pain (LBP). The knowledge from this data is typically known to clinicians who then implement this information to help patients who seek their care.

However, for the individuals outside direct clinical care, their understanding of what helps with pain reduction in LBP may differ. By finding out what these individuals think about what helps them reduce LBP, a clinician would be better able to understand the gap that exists between the clinician and the 'general' individual.

In this study, individuals were invited to respond to questions about what reduces their LBP via an online questionnaire. The question broadly asked: what makes your LBP decrease? And any other things that cause your LBP to decrease? The participants were given a text box to write their response.

The data accumulated from 133 responses revealed that participants most commonly said that their LBP was reduced by (collated by themes) heat/ cold, medication, rest, activity/ exercise, seeing a health professional, stretching/ therapeutic exercise, reducing aggravating activities and psychological changes.

There were also themes that were rarely mentioned including posture/ ergonomics and invasive procedures such as steroid injections. Themes too rare to be included in the study included answers that were unclear such as "avoiding triggers" and "focus on personal good habits" as well as electrotherapies.

In summary, this study revealed that individuals not under direct clinical care said that their LBP was reduced by (collated by themes) heat/cold, medication, rest, activity/exercise, seeing a health professional, stretching/therapeutic exercise, reducing aggravating activities and psychological changes.



## Expert opinion

This is a very powerful study which allows clinicians to see the gap between the field of research and what a 'typical' individual feels about what reduces their LBP.

This sort of qualitative research should just as good guide our management plan to help reduce the knowledge gap between the clinician and the patient.

> From: Setchell et al., *Scand J Pain* (2019) (Epub ahead of print). All rights reserved to Scandinavian Association for the Study of Pain. [Click here for the online summary.](#)



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