

Supporting crew suffering from Back Pain

Herniated discs, strains, sprains, inflammation, stiffness and tenderness are just some of the back pain symptoms reported to the UK Club due to heavy lifting and day to day shipboard activities.

Back pain is one of the leading causes of disability worldwide and is a common health problem experienced in the maritime workplace. Prolonged sitting, lifting a heavy load, incorrect posture and muscle imbalance are just some of the causes.

With the recent innovations in technology many people find themselves spending all day in front of the computer. When it's time to rest often they are doing the same thing in front of the TV or computer screen.

Over time you may feel an ache in your back or neck with the pain lasting

for several days or even longer.

Prolonged sitting is proven to be bad for your health. The sedentary lifestyle is associated with various health hazards such as heart disease, diabetes, obesity, stroke, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

In addition there are the musculoskeletal effects to consider too. According to the World Health Organization 60-70% of the population in industrialised countries will experience back pain at some point in their future.

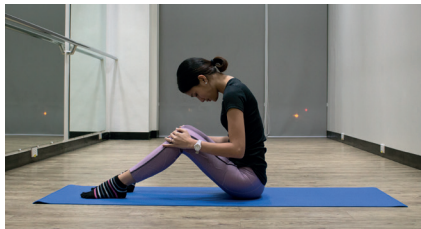
Declaring a history of back pain is important at the PEME, although many sources of back pain can be difficult to locate. Some of the UK Club Crew Health approved physicians advise:

- Crew members who undergo strenuous activities such as long standing, lifting heavy objects, bending forward etc., are prone to back problems.
- During the course of pre-employment medical check-up, as far as examination of extremities and spine is concerned, physicians can perform SLR (straight leg raising) test by virtue of which, they can determine the mobility of spine and other nervous disorders related to spinal nerves.
- Back problems involving the spine certainly are difficult problem to handle. More often, the conditions occur during the course of employment, as these are associated with trauma (e.g. fall, impact injury to the back, etc.) or poor positioning when lifting a heavy object where the sudden upward jerk misaligns the vertebra that eventually results in disc problems.
- Some Crew Health programme members opt to use a self-declaration of back and spine for their crew at PEME (example attached at the end of the advice sheet). The questionnaire helps raise awareness of back and spine aggravators and provides a good source of additional information for the doctor.
- Back care includes good posture and simple exercises to help strengthen the core and other muscles that support the back.



CREW HEALTH ADVICE

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2 Minutes of Warm-up Breathing Forward

Position: Sit up tall with your knees slightly bent and hands on the side of your thighs.

Inhale and hold for 5 seconds. Exhale as you lower your chin to your chest then slowly roll forward with your arms reaching towards your feet. Inhale and hold for 5 seconds. Exhale as you roll up to starting position.

Repeat 10 times.



Hip Rolls

Position: Lie on your back with arms by your side, palms down, feet planted firmly with knees bent.

Inhale then exhale as you roll your hips up to a bridge position starting at the buttocks, then lower back to the mid-back. Inhale and hold for 3-5 seconds. Exhale as you roll back to starting position in the reverse order.

Repeat 10 times.



Side Kick

Position: Lie on your side with the bottom knee bent 90 degrees and the top leg straight. Rest your head on your arm while placing the other hand in front of you for support.

Inhale while lifting the top leg and flexing your foot as you hinge your leg forward. Make sure that your trunk does not lean forward as you do this. Exhale as you return your leg to the starting position.

Repeat 10 times.



16 Minutes of Exercises

Do each move as per the recommended repetitions. Slowly transition to the next exercises.

Ab Prep

Position: Lie on your back with arms by your side, palms down and knees bent.

Inhale while gently bending your neck slightly forward. Exhale as you curl your upper body up, lifting the upper back and arms a few inches above the floor while your hands reach towards your feet. Inhale and hold for 3-5 seconds. Exhale as you return to starting position.

Repeat 10 times.



Cat Stretch

Position: Place your hands and knees on the floor with your hands directly under your shoulders and knees below the hips. Hold your tummy in. Do not let it collapse downward.

Inhale then exhale while arching your back upwards to form a C-shaped curve. Inhale and hold for 3-5 seconds. Exhale while returning to starting position.

Repeat 10 times.



2 Minutes of Cool Down

End your workout with this simple stretch.

Mermaid

Position: Sit with your legs crossed and arms by your side.

Inhale while reaching one arm to the ceiling. Slowly bend towards the opposite side as you exhale. Hold for 3-5 seconds. Inhale as you return to an upright position and exhale while lowering your arm. Repeat the same exercise on the other side.

Repeat 5 times on each side.

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Maintaining a healthy BMI is also advised. In addition some people will find comfort from the use of a hot or cold compress, TENS machine, relaxation techniques and/or meditation.

CREW HEALTH ADVICE

Example of Self-declaration of Back and Spine Form

Self-declaration – Back and Spine			
It is <u>mandatory</u> for all applicants to complete this form. False statements may lead to termination of employment.			
Name:		D.O.B.	
Have you ever suffered from back pain in the past? (Circle one)			Yes No
If yes,			
1.	When? (List year. If more than once, list all years)		
2.	What symptoms and signs did you have? (Please circle appropriate response)		
	a. Pain all over?	Yes No	
	b. Low or high back pain?	Yes No	
	c. Pain also when resting?	Yes No	
	d. Pain radiating to buttocks, legs or arms?	Yes No	
	e. Other (please specify)		
3.	What kind of investigations did you go through: (Please circle appropriate response)		
	a. Examination by general practitioner or seaman's doctor.	Yes No	
	If yes, who? Name, Address and Date of exam		
	b. Examination by specialist?	Yes No	
	If yes, what type of specialist? Name, Address and Date of exam		
	c. Examination by other health professionals	Yes No	
	If yes, please indicate type (chiropractor, physiotherapist, masseur, other)		
	d. X-rays of back/spine	Yes No	
	e. Ultra sound/sonogram, Bone Scan, MRI or CT	Yes No	
	If yes, Type of exam? Name, Address and Date of exam		
4.	What was the diagnosis (i.e. what were you told was wrong with your back?)		
5.	What do you think was the cause:		
	a. Overwork / Over-exertion?	Yes No	c. Infection? Yes No
	b. Acute injury?	Yes No	d. Other
6.	Did you receive any kind of treatment?		Yes No
	If Yes, what kind of treatment?		
	a. Medicine	No Yes	If yes. What type and how long?
	b. Massage	No Yes	
	c. Physiotherapy	No Yes	If yes. What type and how long?
	e. Chiropractic	No Yes	If yes. What type and how long?
	f. Surgery	No Yes	If yes. What type?
7.	Did your back pain lead to:		
	a. Sick leave from work		
	b. Medical Sign-Off	No Yes	If yes, how long?
	c. Disability pay	No Yes	If yes, where? When?
8.	How are you now? (Check one)		
	Fully recovered		
	Recovered, but must be careful with certain types of action		
	State types:		
	Still suffer from back pain (Describe)		
Name (print)		Signature	Date

CREW HEALTH ADVICE

Knowledge, Attitude, Practice Questionnaire Reducing Risk of Osteoarthritis – Protecting your joints

YES NO

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Do you maintain your ideal body weight? The more you weigh, the more stress you are putting on your joints, especially your hips, knees, back and feet. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Do you move your body? Exercise protects joints by strengthening the muscles around them. Strong muscles keep your joints from rubbing against one another and wearing down cartilage. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Do you stand up straight? Good posture protects the joints in your neck, back, hips and knees. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Do you pace yourself? Where possible, alternate periods of heavy activity with periods of rest. Repetitive stress on joints for long periods of time can accelerate the wear and tear that causes osteoarthritis. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Do you listen to your body? If you are in pain, don't ignore it. Pain after activity or exercise can be an indication that you have overstressed your joints. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Are you static? Changing positions regularly will decrease the stiffness in your muscles and joints. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Are you a weekend warrior? Do not engage in activities for which your body is not prepared. Start new activities slowly and safely until you know how your body will react to them. This will reduce the chance of injury. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Do you wear proper safety equipment? Make sure you wear the appropriate PPE, that is comfortable and fits appropriately. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Do you ask for help? Do not carry out a task that is too heavy or big for you to handle. Get another pair of hands to help out. |

Crew Health Advice Back Pain written in collaboration with Halcyon Marine Healthcare Systems, Manila.

www.halcyonmarine.com.ph