

Ask Denise Austin

FITNESS EXPERT

Dealing With Back Pain

(NAPSA)—Back pain doesn't have to mean putting your favorite activities on the back burner. Try these tips from fitness expert Denise Austin:

Q: I often suffer from back pain. What could be causing this?

A: Hang in there, you're not alone! One of the most common problems that adults suffer from is back pain. In fact, 80 percent of adults suffer from lower back pain at some point in their lives. Some of the minor causes of back pain include:

- Being overweight or in poor physical condition
- Poor posture, especially if you stand or sit for long periods of time
- Muscle strain, possibly from lifting something that is too heavy, or lifting objects incorrectly

More serious causes include "wear and tear" arthritis, fractured vertebrae and a "slipped" or herniated disc. It is best to visit your physician to determine the exact cause of your pain.

Luckily, most back pain is not serious and your doctor will probably recommend an over-the-counter pain medication like Advil to ease your discomfort until your back is healthy again.

Q: My job involves a lot of lifting. Do you have any good tips that can help prevent an aching back?

A: Yes! The easiest way to avoid back pain is to make sure that you are practicing good posture and are lifting heavy objects properly.

Be sure your back is straight when walking. When seated, sit with both feet on the floor, your knees at least as high as your hips, and your back pressed firmly against the back of the chair. When you are lifting any object, always bend at the knees and not at the waist. Never twist while lifting and never lift anything above shoulder level. Practicing these prevention



Fitness expert Denise Austin recommends stretching frequently and practicing good posture to avoid back pain.

techniques will help stop the pain before it starts.

Q: As a busy mother of three children, I sometimes get painful backaches. What is the best treatment?

A: Moms and dads don't always realize all the extra stress they put on their backs when they carry the children, lift the car seat into the car, or simply pick up toys. Remember, whatever you suspect the cause of your back pain to be, the first step should be to consult your doctor—but here are some common treatments that she may recommend.

Bed rest may be suggested for the first day or two of your pain. After that, apply a cold pack or a heat pack to the area depending on the injury. Massage the area—especially if you are experiencing a muscle spasm. And for temporary relief of back pain to help you get on with your day, take a non-prescription pain reliever such as Advil. Once the healing process has begun, your doctor may show you a series of exercises that will strengthen your back and help to prevent back pain in the future.

For these and other pain-free tips, check out the Advil Learning Center at Advil.com.