



OSTEOPATHY – WHAT TO EXPECT

Osteopathy is a form of manual therapy that can have beneficial effects for a variety of muscle and joint conditions. When you first visit an osteopath, you'll be asked about your current symptoms and medical history. All information will be treated as confidential in accordance with standards of practice set out by the General Osteopathic Council and the Data Protection Act 1998.

After an initial examination, your osteopath will discuss treatment options with you so that you can agree a course of action and the likely associated costs. Treatment may require several visits and, very occasionally, further tests and or referrals to other appropriate health care professionals.

Most osteopaths will begin your treatment at your first appointment – you may experience mild discomfort afterwards, but in most cases this will resolve within 24 hours. If you have any concerns about your treatment we encourage you to discuss these further with your osteopath.

You're more than welcome to bring someone with you for your consultation.

The Institute of Osteopathy is the professional membership organisation for osteopaths, proudly representing the majority of all practitioners within the United Kingdom.

We're committed to the continuing promotion and development of osteopathy.

To find out more, visit our website or call us:

osteopathy.org
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You can also search for your nearest registered osteopath on our website.

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Osteopathy for Back Pain

Osteopathy works



Some back pains shouldn't linger
osteopathy.org

BACK PAIN

Back pain affects up to 80% of us at some point in our lives. The NHS spends more than £1 billion per year on back pain related costs, but even more money is lost through leaves of absence in the workplace caused by excessive aches and pains.

Your spine is made of solid, bony blocks reinforced by strong ligaments and muscles. It is surprisingly difficult to damage your spine, but if strained, the surrounding muscles and ligaments can cause discomfort and pain.

HOW CAN YOUR OSTEOPATH HELP?

Often back pain resolves quickly by itself, but if it persists for more than a few days, an osteopath may be able to help.

Osteopaths use a wide range of gentle hands-on techniques. Treatment varies between patients depending on your age, fitness and diagnosis, but often focuses on releasing tension, stretching muscles and mobilising joints – all of which may help to relieve your pain. Before you receive treatment your osteopath and you will jointly decide an appropriate and suitable treatment plan. Occasionally osteopathic techniques can result in an audible 'click', this is perfectly normal. Research evidence shows that these manipulations can have beneficial effects, especially in the back, helping you to return to normal activity.

About half of those who suffer an episode of back pain will have a recurrence of symptoms within a few years. Your osteopath can give you advice about what to do and how to keep active if your pain does return.

Stress can increase the amount of pain you feel by magnifying the effect of tension and muscle spasms. Your osteopath may talk to you about breathing and relaxation exercises to help relieve this tension.

Osteopaths are highly trained professionals who are skilled in diagnosing problems, including those which may require further investigation. Back pain is not normally caused by anything serious, though it is natural to worry about what may be causing your symptoms. Your osteopath will always complete a routine examination that checks for more serious diagnoses and will advise and discuss with you on any further action that might be required.

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOURSELF?

Here are some tips that will help you to care for your back:

1. Early intervention can reduce the amount that you have to suffer and get you back to normal activities more quickly. It may be beneficial to seek advice sooner rather than later
2. When lifting and carrying, always keep the item close to your body. Make sure to bend your knees and let your legs do the work. Try not to twist your back – turn with your feet
3. Take regular exercise (aim for 30 minutes every day). People who are physically fit generally get less back pain, and recover faster if they do get it

4. Pace yourself when undertaking any physical activity, especially when it is intensive or you are unaccustomed to it i.e. spring cleaning, or tidying the garden after the winter

5. Adjust your car seats, use a rolled up towel to support your lower back and take regular breaks on long journeys

6. Mattresses and sofas wear out over time and can cause back pain. If yours is over seven years old, it might be time to get a new one

7. Keeping active can help with most back pain. Prolonged bed rest is usually not good for your back, and delays recovery. If you have any concerns about your back an osteopath may be able to help

