

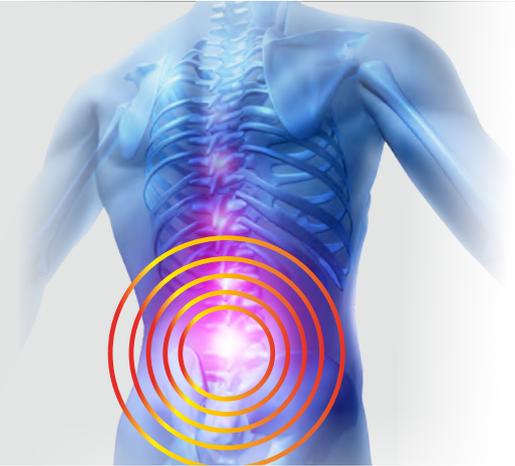


# MAHARISHI AYURVEDA

HEALTH CENTRE BAD EMS

Since 1992

## BACK PAIN The most common disease



**Back pain is the most common disease and the second-most common reason for doctor visits in Germany. According to a survey by the Bertelsmann Foundation, around 20 percent of all insureds seek medical advice concerning back pain at least once a year.**

Modern medicine broadly distinguishes between specific and nonspecific back pain. Back pain is called specific when there is a concrete physical cause, such as vertebral body wear or a herniated disc. Frequently, however, the symptoms have to be called nonspecific, because medical examination does not find a physical origin. The usual explanation given is that mental or physical causes produce tense muscles.

Ayurveda differentiates back pain types according to the Doshas involved in the development. Pure **Vata back pain** is caused by mental and physical tension: by emotional pressure, which increases muscle tension in the lower back, or by strain from incorrect stooping or lifting over a long time. This is a stabbing pain that is changeable – an early stage that comes and goes.

The typical **Vata-Pitta back pain** gives burning and throbbing sensations, always appears in the same place, and reaches full intensity within a few hours. It is often most pronounced at noon and midnight.

**Vata-Kapha backache** also stays at the same place, but

it is a dull pain. It develops slowly over many hours, usually remains for several days and is often most pronounced in the morning and evening.

While physical, chronic, and severe back pain belongs in the hands of an experienced doctor, who can determine the specific cause of the complaints and prescribe a range of measures for relief, including appropriate Maharishi Ayurveda herbal preparations, unspecific back pain can be alleviated by a number of Ayurvedic recommendations.





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**As Vata Dosha is always involved in some way, the first thing Ayurveda recommends is a package of measures to pacify excess Vata:**

1. Lightly oil the sore area with warm sesame oil for a few minutes, as both warmth and oil will reduce Vata. It's best to leave it for an hour, and ideally put a hot water bottle on it.

Warm oil is exactly the opposite of Vata: the qualities of Vata Dosha are cold, dry, and rough, and therefore warm, liquid, and smooth qualities are perfect for pacifying Vata.

If your back pain is recurring or chronic, herbal oils MA 929 and MA 628 can be very effective. (They are available e.g. from [MAP Europe](#).)

Particularly effective with such conditions is a Panchakarma course of treatment, because it makes use of oily enemas (Basti) containing selected substances which enter through the intestinal walls and nourish and relax the entire lower back.

2. Keep warm, especially when you are sitting and working at the computer, because screen work increases Vata Dosha. Remember: Vata is cold, so you need a lot of warmth now.
3. Avoid hot spices such as chilis and onions. Spicy food dries the body and again, 'dry' is a Vata quality. To balance Vata, the opposite quality is needed: smooth and soft. For example, you can add a little more Ghee (clarified butter) to your food than usual, providing more smoothness to the tissues – including those of the lower back.
4. Take mostly warm meals and drinks: in the morning a warm oatmeal porridge, at noon a warm lunch,

and in the evening a gently spiced vegetable soup. Everything cold further increases Vata and brings tension and more congestion in the body. Warmth, on the other hand, supports relaxation and helps to open the body's delicate transport channels (Shrotas). This allows the molecular building blocks from the digested food to better reach the cramped, aching back again and nourish and soften it.

Drinking tea made with ajowan seeds (also called carom or ajwain, *Trachyspermum ammi*) can also be very good for back ache.

5. In most cases, Ama is the basic cause of backache. Ama is the Ayurvedic term for metabolic residues that are produced when food is not properly digested, for example by eating before the previous meal has been digested completely, like with in-between meals and snacks. Heavy meals in the evening, cheese, cottage cheese or other hard-to-digest protein products also lead to Ama. Ama can be eliminated through a Panchakarma cure or through a [ten-day detox regimen](#) you can do at home.
6. Do you know the 'crocodile exercise' for the lower back? This simple yoga exercise promotes gentle stretching, relaxation and blood circulation, especially in the lumbar region.



Lie on your back and angle your knees. The soles of the feet remain on the floor – pull the soles of your feet towards your pelvis as far as you can. Stretch out your arms sideways, at a 90 degree angle. Now



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lower your knees slowly to one side, keeping your feet in the same place, and turn your head to the opposite side. Breathe slowly and relax. After a short break, stretch to the other side just as slowly and gently.

You can do this exercise three times to each side – **but beware:** it should only create a pleasantly-mild stretching feeling, never an unpleasant pull or even pain! Repeat this exercise gently two or three times a day until you notice some improvement. Thereafter it is sufficient to do them once a day for prevention. Of course, severe back pain belongs in the hands of an experienced Ayurvedic doctor!

7. A daily walk trains the muscles of the abdomen and the back while simultaneously pacifying Vata imbalance. It directly addresses the basic cause of back pain. Aim for a brisk walk of at least half an hour, but watch your body signals and walk at a pace that doesn't go beyond half of your capability.

