

## Manual Handling Training

If you are required to lift or carry as part of your job, a risk assessment should be carried out and you should be given suitable training to ensure you approach this safely. Ensure you are up to date with manual handling training and consult your manager or health & safety team if you are not sure.

For more information including guidance please refer to HSE Manual Handling Guide or contact your manager or health and safety team.

## Lifting

Should you need to lift anything at home or work, follow these simple guidelines.

- Keep your feet apart to maintain stability.
- Bend your hips and knees.
- Carry the load close to your body at waist height.
- Avoid twisting.
- Move smoothly, avoiding quick jerky movements.
- Limit lifting from the floor or above shoulder height.
- Avoid repetitive lifting.
- There are no legal lifting limits but general guidance of maximum weights are provided by the HSE.

Please contact our Working Well team for more information.

## Opening hours

8:30am - 4:30pm  
Monday to Friday

To ensure you speak to one of our co-ordinators please try to call us between 10:00am - 4:00pm. Outside of our opening hours we provide an automated information and answerphone service.

## Contact details

(t) 01452 894480  
(e) [workingwell@nhs.net](mailto:workingwell@nhs.net)  
(w) [www.workingwell2gether.nhs.uk](http://www.workingwell2gether.nhs.uk)

## WorkingWell

The Orchard Centre  
Gloucester Royal Hospital,  
Gloucester, GL1 3NN



WWforLowerBack001  
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Staff health and wellbeing



# WorkingWell

## *for Low Back Pain Management*

**2gether**  
Making life better

2gether  
NHS Foundation Trust 



You do not have to be pain free to return to work

## Our Working Well Vision

A healthy, happy and productive workforce.

## Working Well for musculoskeletal care

Low back pain affects 60-80% of the population at some time in their lives. Most episodes are self limiting and settle within days to weeks. The best treatment is to stay active and take pain killers as necessary. Low back pain is recurrent in nature, therefore it is important to learn how to manage your symptoms.

## Managing low back pain

- Be active e.g. walking or swimming
- Maintain a good posture at home and work
- Establish and maintain a healthy weight

## The benefits of exercise

- Helps to maintain flexibility and strength
- Helps with weight control
- Reduces stress
- Releases endorphins or 'feel good' hormones which act as natural pain killers

Your back is designed for movement, therefore the sooner you start everyday activities, the sooner you will feel better. Movement may be sore to start with therefore steadily increase your activity by doing a little more each day.

**Remember that experiencing discomfort does not mean you are causing damage.**

## Low back pain at work

You do not need to be pain free to return to work. Being at work is good for you and your back. Studies have shown the longer you are off work, the harder it is to return and the more likely you are to develop chronic pain. Work may increase your pain in the short term, but steps can be taken to temporarily adjust your hours or role if necessary whilst you are recovering. Consideration of your work area or station and how you lift or handle loads or patients is important.

## Workstation tips for desk workers

Adopting a good posture and regular change of position will help to reduce strain on your back and help to relieve stiffness and tension.

- Frequent short breaks are better than infrequent long breaks
- Change activity regularly e.g. if you are sitting, stand up and walk around. Make the most of natural breaks in your desk tasks
- Adjust your chair and screen to find a comfortable position
- Your forearms should be horizontal to the desk
- Your eyes should be level with the top of the screen
- Ensure there is plenty of space on and under your desk for free movement.
- Avoid over-reaching
- A document holder may help to reduce awkward and repetitive neck movements when inputting information.

Don't forget to make sure you have completed an up to date DSE Workstation assessment - You can access this from [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

## Manual Handling

If you are a healthcare worker working with patients, ensure correct and 'best' use of manual handling equipment, including slide sheets, hoists, pat slides, sliding boards and ensure you are up to date with manual handling training. Most areas should have a designated manual handling key worker, who you can contact with any queries.

For all other loads ask yourself:

- Can you use a lifting aid?
- Can you make the load lighter or less bulky?
- Can you grip the load securely?
- Can you reduce the distance from your start to finish point?
- Always ensure your route is clear