



DISC PATHOLOGY PAIN

Pain Relief. Recovery Simplified.

Let's keep this really simple...



Important Information & Safety Guidance

At **Formby Injury & Rehab Clinic**, our aim is to provide clear, evidence-based information to help you better understand your body and feel more confident managing common musculoskeletal problems.

The information in this booklet and on our website is provided for **general educational purposes only**.

It is not a substitute for a full medical assessment, diagnosis, or personalised treatment plan.

Please Read Carefully Before Using This Guide

Every person is different.

Pain can have many causes.

What is appropriate for one person may not be appropriate for another.

By using this guide, you acknowledge that:

- You are responsible for how you choose to apply this information.
- You will move within your own limits.
- You will stop any exercise or test that causes severe, worsening, or unusual symptoms.
- You understand that online information cannot replace an in-person clinical assessment.

When This Guide May Not Be Appropriate

Do **not** rely solely on this guide if you are experiencing:

- Loss of bladder or bowel control
- Numbness around the groin or saddle area
- Significant or worsening leg weakness
- Severe, unrelenting night pain
- Fever with back pain
- Recent major trauma
- Unexplained weight loss
- A history of cancer with new back pain
- Any condition where your GP or specialist has advised medical supervision

If any of these apply, seek urgent medical advice.

Exercise & Movement Disclaimer

All exercises and self-tests provided are intended to be:

- Gentle
- Controlled
- Within tolerable limits

You should never push into severe pain.

Mild discomfort can be normal when moving a sensitive area.

Sharp, worsening, spreading, or intense pain is not.

If your symptoms significantly worsen, persist beyond a few days without improvement, or concern you in any way, you should consult a qualified healthcare professional.

Limitation of Liability

Formby Injury & Rehab Clinic Ltd accepts no liability for injury, loss, or damage arising from the use or misuse of information contained within this booklet or on our website.

By choosing to follow this guidance independently, you accept full responsibility for your actions.

Our Intention

Our intention is never to replace proper medical care.

It is to:

- Reduce fear
- Improve understanding
- Encourage safe movement
- Support informed decisions

If at any point you are unsure, concerned, or feel your symptoms are not improving, seeking professional advice is always the safest step.

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This booklet is created to educate and equip the reader with the tools they need to get out of pain. With that being said, not everyone heals the same and sometimes a helping hand can be a useful guide.

In this booklet you will find:

1. **Self-checks / tests** - To help get a good idea for what might be causing your pain
2. **Anatomy of the disc** – To help understand where your pain is located
3. **Exercises** – To get you out of pain based on your findings from self-check & Anatomy

SELF-CHECK:

Simple Self-Checks for Disc Related Pain

(To help you understand what may be contributing to your symptoms)

These checks are not about diagnosing yourself.

They are about noticing patterns:

- What feels worse
- What feels better
- What direction feels safest

Move slowly.

Stop if pain sharply worsens.

You are gathering information — not pushing through pain.

1. Disc Check

Straight Leg Raise

How to do it:

1. Lie on your back.
2. Keep one leg straight.
3. Slowly lift it up.
4. Stop when you feel resistance.

What to notice:

- Is it just a stretch in the back of your thigh?
- Or sharp, shooting pain below the knee?
- Or sharp, local lower back pain?

What this may suggest:

Stretching in the hamstrings is common.

Sharp, shooting pain may suggest nerve sensitivity / disc.

2. Sit Down Test

Valsalva-Maneuver

How to do it:


1. From standing go to a seated position
2. Make sure your back is rounded (not straight)
3. Cough 2-3 X

What to notice:

- Does the lower back pain intensify in a seated position?
- Does the coughing make the pain in the lower back worse?
- Does the pain ease when you have your back straight (e.g standing)

What this may suggest:

If the pain is made worse when coughing or sitting with a rounded back posture this is likely to indicate a disc pathology causing your pain. If the pain is eased by standing or having your back straight this further supports the theory of a disc herniation causing your pain.



Anatomy Of the Spinal Disc

The spinal discs are made up of an outer and an inner layer. Pain can arise when one or both structures becomes irritated or sensitive. Disc related pain is most common in the lower back.

The Intervertebral Discs (The Cushions)

Between each vertebra sits a **disc**.

Each disc has:

- A firm outer ring
- A softer centre

Discs act as shock absorbers.

They allow movement while spreading load across the spine.

When a disc becomes irritated or inflamed, it may cause:

- Central lower back pain
- Pain spreading into the buttock
- Pain travelling into the leg
- Increased pain when bending or sitting

Disc irritation does not automatically mean serious damage.

In many cases, symptoms improve with graded movement and appropriate loading.

Why Disc Related Pain Occurs

Most disc pain is classified as **mechanical pain**.

Often caused by:

- Movement
- Posture (long periods of sitting)
- Load (sudden increase)
- Sudden bend or twist
- A long-standing condition
- Decreased spinal stability
- Stress or poor sleep

Our disc related pain patients often present to us experiencing:

- **Muscle spasms, ache pain**, or sudden **shooting pain** after **bending or twisting**.
- **Nerve pain** into the hips, groin, legs, or buttocks
- **Sciatica**
- **Chronic pain**

In many cases, the **disc pain** causes an **increased pain** response making **pain a multifactorial** system. That does **not** mean the condition won't heal with the right steps.



EXCERCISES

The Exercises provided will provide an actionable guide with the aim to increase mobility and decrease pain to the disc-related structures mentioned.

Gentle Exercises for Lower Back Pain:

(disc related & nerve related lower back ache)

Move slowly.

You should feel muscles working — Ache is normal, a sharp pain greater than 5/10 is not.

Disc-Sensitive Exercise Routine

(For disc-related lower back pain)

Move slowly.

You should feel muscles working — Ache is normal, a sharp pain greater than 5/10 is not.

If leg pain worsens or travels further down, stop and reset.

1. Adductor Squeeze with Pelvic Tilt (On Your Back)

Purpose:

Activates deep support muscles without stressing the disc.

How to do it:

1. Lie on your back with knees bent.
2. Place a pillow or ball between your knees.
3. Gently tilt your pelvis so your lower back presses into the floor.
4. Lightly squeeze the pillow.
(Breathe normally.)
5. Hold for 5 seconds.
6. Relax slowly.

Reps:

8–10 repetitions,
2-3 sets daily.

2. Tabletop Toe Taps (Holding Pelvic Tilt)

Purpose:

Improves control and support around the lower back.

How to do it:

1. Lie on your back.
2. Bend hips and knees to 90 degrees (shins parallel to the floor).
3. Gently tilt your pelvis so your lower back lightly presses down.
4. Slowly lower one foot to tap the floor.
(Exhale as the toe taps.)
5. Bring it back up.
(Inhale as you reset.)
6. Repeat on the other side.

Reps:

8–10 repetitions per side,
2-3 sets daily.

3. Single Knee Hug with Pelvic Tilt

Purpose:

Reduces tension and encourages disc-friendly movement.

How to do it:

1. Lie on your back.
2. Gently tilt your pelvis.
3. Bring one knee toward your chest.
4. Hold briefly.
5. Lower it slowly.
6. Repeat on the same side before switching.

Reps:

8–10 repetitions per side,
2-3 sets daily.

4. Side-Lying Rotational Stability (Clamshell)

Purpose:

Improves hip strength to reduce strain on the lower back.

How to do it:

1. Lie on your side.
2. Stack hips, knees, and feet on top of each other.
3. Bend knees slightly.
4. Keep feet together.
5. Lift your top knee slowly.
6. Lower it with control.

Reps:

8–10 repetitions per side,
2-3 sets daily.

5. Prone Hip Extension with Pelvic Tilt

Purpose:

Activates glutes while protecting the lower back.

How to do it:

1. Lie on your stomach.
2. Rest your forehead on your hands.
3. Gently tighten your stomach to flatten your lower back slightly.
4. Lift one leg a few inches off the floor.
5. Lower slowly.

Reps:

8–10 repetitions per side,
2-3 sets daily.

6. Cobra (Gentle Extension)

Purpose:

Encourages disc symptoms to centralise.

How to do it:

1. Lie on your stomach.
2. Place hands under shoulders.
3. Gently push your chest up, keeping hips on the floor.
4. Only go as far as comfortable.
5. Lower slowly.

Reps:

8–10 repetitions per side,
2-3 sets daily.

