

## Back Sprain Lumbar Strain - Bombay Spine Clinic

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- Back Sprain / Lumbar Strain

### What Is It?

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- A Back Sprain or Lumbar Strain is one of the most common causes of low back pain. It occurs when the muscles, tendons or ligaments supporting the lower back become overstretched, strained or injured. This can result from sudden movements, improper lifting techniques, prolonged poor posture or excessive physical activity.
- Although the pain can sometimes be severe, most back sprains are mechanical in nature and improve with appropriate treatment and rehabilitation.
- Common Symptoms
- Patients may experience:
  - Pain in the lower back
  - Muscle spasm or tightness
  - Stiffness while bending or standing
  - Difficulty getting up from a chair or bed
  - Pain that worsens with movement
  - Reduced flexibility of the lower back
  - Pain after lifting heavy objects
  - Pain after prolonged sitting or standing
- Unlike nerve-related conditions, a simple back sprain usually does not cause pain radiating below the knee, numbness or weakness in the legs.

### Causes & Risk Factors

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- Common causes include:
  - Lifting heavy objects incorrectly
  - Sudden twisting movements
  - Prolonged sitting
  - Poor posture
  - Excessive physical exertion
  - Sedentary lifestyle
  - Weak core muscles
  - Sports-related injuries

- Obesity
- Repetitive bending activities
- Risk factors include:
- Desk-based occupations
- Lack of regular exercise
- Smoking
- Poor ergonomics
- Previous episodes of back pain
- When Should You Seek Medical Advice?
- Medical evaluation is recommended if:
- Pain persists beyond 2–3 weeks

### Symptoms are progressively worsening

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- Pain radiates into the leg
- Tingling or numbness develops
- Weakness occurs in the leg or foot
- Pain follows a significant injury or fall
- Fever or unexplained weight loss is present
- Pain affects sleep or daily activities
- How Is It Diagnosed?
- Clinical Examination
- A detailed history and physical examination are usually sufficient to diagnose a lumbar strain and rule out more serious conditions.
- X-Ray
- May be advised when persistent pain, deformity or trauma is present.
- MRI
- Recommended if symptoms suggest a slip disc, nerve compression or other spinal pathology.
- CT Scan
- Occasionally required for detailed assessment of spinal bones, especially after trauma.
- Blood Tests
- May be advised if infection, inflammatory disease or other medical conditions are suspected.

### Treatment Options

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- Non-Surgical Treatment
- Most patients improve without surgery.

### Treatment may include:

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- Activity modification
- Short-term pain medications
- Physiotherapy
- Core strengthening exercises
- Stretching exercises
- Posture correction
- Ergonomic modifications
- Weight management
- Heat therapy
- Remaining active within comfortable limits is generally encouraged, as prolonged bed rest may delay recovery.
- Surgical Treatment
- Surgery is not required for a simple back sprain or lumbar strain.
- If symptoms are caused by an underlying condition such as a slip disc, spinal instability or nerve compression, further evaluation may be required to determine the appropriate treatment.

## Frequently Asked Questions

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- 1. Is a back sprain the same as a slip disc?
- No. A back sprain involves injury to muscles or ligaments, whereas a slip disc involves displacement of disc material that may compress nerves.
- 2. How long does a lumbar strain take to recover?
- Most patients improve within a few days to several weeks, depending on the severity of the injury.
- 3. Should I take complete bed rest?
- Prolonged bed rest is generally not recommended. Gentle activity and gradual mobilisation often aid recovery.
- 4. Can physiotherapy help?
- Yes. Physiotherapy helps reduce pain, restore movement and strengthen supporting muscles.
- 5. When should I get an MRI?
- MRI is usually considered when symptoms persist, recur frequently or are associated with leg pain, numbness or weakness.
- 6. Can poor posture cause low back pain?
- Yes. Poor posture is one of the most common contributors to mechanical back pain.
- 7. Is walking beneficial for back pain?
- In most cases, gentle walking is beneficial and promotes recovery.
- 8. Can back sprains recur?
- Yes. Without addressing posture, ergonomics and core strength, symptoms may recur.
- Related Conditions
- Mechanical Low Back Pain (Lumbago)
- Slip Disc
- Sciatica

- Lumbar Canal Stenosis
- Spondylolisthesis
- Osteoporosis
- Sacroiliitis
- When Should You Consult a Spine Specialist?
- If your back pain persists despite treatment, recurs frequently, radiates into the leg, or interferes with your daily activities, a consultation with a spine specialist can help identify the underlying cause and guide appropriate treatment.
- Need Expert Advice?
- Book a consultation with Dr. Siddharth Katkade or upload your MRI/report for review through our Patient Resource Centre.

#### **Need Clinical Evaluation or Second Opinion?**

This educational document was prepared by **Dr. Siddharth Katkade**. For appointments or to share MRI scan reports for clinical review, call **+91 88507 73095** or consult at Byculla (E) / Khar (W) clinics.