

Key messages and phrases for clinicians

Golden rules

Keep moving even if slowly at first
 Keep living and working normally
 Avoid bed rest during the day
 Exercise
 Don't sit down for too long
 Stay active and remember to re-introduce activities like heavy lifting gradually
 Don't be afraid to take simple painkillers

Avoid

We should not promote beliefs about structural damage/dysfunction

'You have degeneration/arthritis/disc bulge/disc disease/a slipped disc'

'Your back is damaged/ injured'

'It's wear and tear' **Use** *'Wear and repair'* instead

'You'll need a scan to see what's going on'

We should not promote fear beyond acute phase

'You have to be careful/take it easy from now on'

'Your back is weak'

'You have poor core stability'

'You should avoid bending/lifting'

We should not promote a negative future outlook

'Your back wears out as you get older'

'This will be here for the rest of your life'

'Better keep moving or you may end up disabled'

We should not suggest Hurt equals harm

'Stop if you feel any pain'

'Let pain guide you'

Use

We should be Promoting resilience and Encourage normal activity and movement

'Your back is one of the strongest structures of the body'

'Your back is robust and safe to move'

'Relaxed movement will help your back pain settle' *'Motion is lotion'*

'Protecting your back and avoiding movement can make you worse'

'Even if it's painful, moving will make you stronger, keeping active is the best thing you can do'

We should use a bio psychosocial approach

'Back pain does not mean your back is damaged'

'Sleeping well, exercise, a healthy diet and cutting down on smoking will all help as well'

'The brain acts as an amplifier – the more you worry and think about your pain the worse it gets'

Encourage self-management

'Let's work out a plan to help you help yourself'

'Getting back to work as you're able, even part time at first, will help you recover'

Address concerns about imaging results and pain

'Your scan changes are normal, like grey hair'

'A picture of your back won't make it better, moving will'

'Movements will be painful at first – like an ankle sprain – but they will get better as you get active'