

## Lower Back Pain

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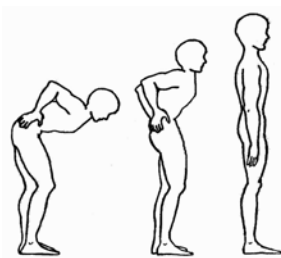
Pain is experienced as a variety of sensations, ranging from dull distending pain to sharp stabbing pain and is felt in varying intensities. Regardless of the type of pain or the individual's tolerance to that pain, any discomfort that is perceived as pain is the body's warning system that alerts you to a problem.

Of all the musculo-skeletal complaints, back ache is the most common. It is estimated that at least 50% of people in Western industrialized countries will suffer from back pain at some time in their life.

Chinese medicine, and in particular acupuncture, gives excellent results in the treatment of backache. With treatments that date back at least 5 thousand years. According to Chinese physiology, the causes of back pain are

1. Excessive physical work
2. Excessive sexual activity
3. Pregnancy and childbirth
4. Invasion of external cold and dampness
5. Overwork
6. Inadequate exercise

The acupuncturist will ask many questions about your health and past diseases including your family's history. Once all the information is obtained, he does a differential diagnosis that results in a pattern of disease. Chinese medicine, unlike Western medicine does not treat symptoms, but syndromes. By this I mean that the acupuncturist will always include treatment to combat the cause of the disease, along with treatment to reduce the pain, which is the symptom of the disease.



Many patients that have come to my clinic for lower back pain have been diagnosed with an underlying problem that manifests with back pain. In most cases it is a simple disorder to treat, and usually requires only a few acupuncture treatments, which are followed up with some herbs and exercises to help complete the treatment regime, resulting in long lasting pain relief. They are usually very pleased to find out that such relief can be obtained by the use of hair-thin needles and not having the need for strong

drug consumption.

Although back pain may be only a minimal discomfort, it may be a sign that some underlying issues need to be addressed. With respect to Chinese physiology, issues like Qi stagnation, Blood stagnation, Dampness or Kidney deficiency may be some of the causes of the back pain.

1. Do you have sharp or dull pain?
2. Does it stay in one area, or does it move around?
3. Does it improve with rest?
4. Is it worse in the morning and improve with time, or does it get worse?
5. Does weather aggravate it, and what type of weather?

Although there are many more questions to ask, it is beyond the scope of this article. The one thing to remember is that a backache is not always related to a specific back problem, but may be the manifestation of an underlying medical condition. Of course, sprains and strains of the lower back are directly related to that area, and should be attended to immediately, to avoid having it become a chronic problem for many years to come.