of articles on back exercises in future editions of the Star Mag to help you mobilise your back.

If simple techniques do not work, the next step in treating your back is by the use of simple painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen. Some forms of back pain may be severe enough to require steroid injections, specially if one of your nerves is getting pinched by a vertebral bone.

Another treatment is called TENS, which involves the passage of small amounts of (non-painful) electrical currents in the back, which helps to relieve the pain for some people. Unfortunately, this treatment is rarely available in Bangladesh.

Surgery is rarely indicated for back pain unless there is injury to a vertebral bone, nerve impingement or a malignant growth in the spine.

Nobody should have to go through the nightmare of back pain, and I shall now give you a few tips on how you can stop back pain before it affects you.

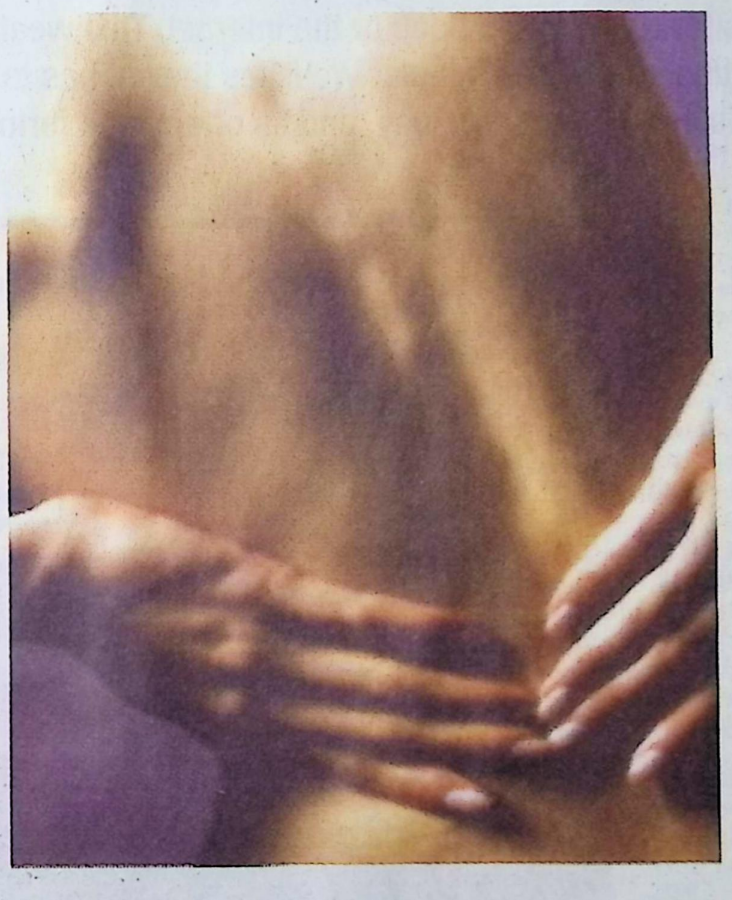
First, exercise your back. This does not necessarily have to involve the gym. Just take a walk in a park, paying particular attention to keeping your spine straight. Swimming is a great exercise because it takes the pressure off your back when you are floating in water.

Second, ensure that you mobilise your spine everyday by bending and stretching. This will keep your back muscles toned and strong. Weak back muscles are unable to support the heavy bones of your spine, and this often causes back pain.

Third, stop smoking! Smoking is bad for your health in countless ways. Smoking reduces the amount of oxygenated blood in your body, and this slows down the healing process of injuries to the back.

Fourth, maintain a healthy weight. If you are overweight, it puts extra pressure on your back, making it more vulnerable to injury.

The back is prone to frequent injuries as it bears a large proportion of our body weight. Any awkward stress, such as carrying a very heavy object or making an uncomfortable trunk movement, can injure the back and trigger back pain.



Fifth, follow the following exercises to optimise your body mechanics. When you stand for long periods, relieve the pressure off your back by raising your leg and placing your foot onto a small stool alternately, and repeat a few times. If you work in an office that requires you to sit for long periods, support your back with a large cushion or rolled towel to maintain the natural curvature of your back. Choose a seat that has back support and armrests. Always ensure that your hips and knees are in the same level when you are sitting down. When you have to pick an object from the floor, don't bend you back to pick it up : flex your knees and keep your back straight when reaching for the floor. Both hard and soft beds are bad for you back, the best mattress is a medium-firm one. Don't believe people when they say sleeping on a rock hard bed is the best way to dealing with back pain. Use comfortable pillows, but make sure it does not cause your neck to flex too much.

Just like any other part of your body, your spine needs adequate care. So look after it well. After all, its not that hard to make a few adjustments to your daily routine in order to maintain good body mechanics, and this is key to maintaining a firm, straight and healthy back. Having a good posture is not only good for your spine, it also makes you come across as a confident and poised individual.

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