

Assessment Document

Note: You can use this assessment guide as an extra source of reference and to record your assessment findings.

You can refer back to this document to check your progress or if we find any specific signs and symptoms you can use your notes when communicating with any other health professionals.

Cauda Equina Syndrome

If you have lower back pain and you also notice any of the following symptoms you may be suffering from Cauda Equina Syndrome:

- Changes to your normal bowel and bladder habits, i.e. unable to control your bowel or bladder or difficulty passing urine.
- Numbness in your groin, genital area or your genitals.
- Changes to your walking pattern due to loss of leg coordination.
- Numbness or sensation loss in both feet.

You should contact your GP or contact the Emergency department of your nearest hospital straight away. Do not delay with these symptoms.

What is Cauda Equina Syndrome (CES)? CES is a rare but serious condition where the nerves at the very bottom of the spinal cord become compressed. It is essential to seek immediate treatment to prevent any long-term nerve damage.

Physical Trauma from an accident or impact.

Have you had an accident or a fall which has caused severe restrictions to your movement? If you have then you should get a proper in person medical assessment.

Progressively worsening pain.

If your pain is worsening despite exercise rehabilitation or your experiencing pain at rest or at night then don't start this course or stop this course and seek professional assessment first.

Fever (high temperature)

If you have a high temperature or feel generally unwell then consult your doctor.

History of Cancer

If you have a history of cancer and have not had your back pain professionally assessed, please do so before starting this course. This is standard advice and standard procedure here in the UK.

Worsening tingling or sensation loss in one of your lower limbs

Sciatica is a common nerve irritation that causes pain and sensation changes in one leg. Even if you have been assessed if these symptoms worsen then consult your doctor.

Spinal fractures

Fractures of the spine can occur from physical trauma, like falls and impacts. Fractures can also occur from low levels of trauma if you have bone thinning, commonly termed osteoporosis or osteopenia. If you have specific central pain in your spine and feel you may be at risk of osteoporosis, then consult your doctor.

If you have any concerns regarding anything, we have just been through please make sure you contact your GP or Physical therapists. You will need to see a professional in person.

Getting you moving

Straight leg raise (SLR).

When you lay on your back and raise your leg do you experience severe leg or back pain before 45 degrees of hip flexion? If you do and you have been suffering from pain and sensation changes in one leg, then it is most likely you have what is commonly called sciatica. As you probably already know this is a particularly painful and stubborn condition.

	SLR score Initial	SLR score week 1	SLR score week 4
Right Leg	Example: 45 degrees with pain in foot.		
Left Leg			

Walking: Can you walk comfortably, without tension, pain, and compensations? are you relaxed? Can your spine rotate freely to both sides? What happens if you walk faster?

Walking Notes	Initial	Week 1	Week 4
Can you walk comfortably?			
Do you feel tense when you walk?			

Do you feel pain when you walk?			
Are there compensations occurring when you walk?			
How relaxed do you feel when you walk?			
Can your spine rotate freely to both sides?			
What happens when you walk faster than normal?			

Bending: Can you bend forwards and touch the floor (knees bent or straight)? Are you confident or fearful when performing this action? Can you feel your lower back bending as you flex forwards, this is what it should do by the way?

Bending forward	Initial	Week 1	Week 4
Are you confident or fearful when performing this action?			
Can you feel your lower back bending as you flex forwards?			

Twisting: From this position can you twist from side to side? How does it feel? Is there a restriction to one side? Are you restricting your own movement?

Twisting notes	Initial	Week 1	Week 4
Can you twist from side to side?			

How does it feel?			
Is there a restriction to one side?			
Are you restricting your own movement?			

Squatting: How far can you squat? Do you feel any pain or restriction when you squat? How long can you hold the squat position for before it gets uncomfortable?

Squatting	Initial	Week 1	Week 4
How far can you squat? Can you get your bum lower than your knees?			
Do you feel any pain or restriction when you squat?			
How long can you hold the squat position for before it gets uncomfortable?			

Remember! It's not just about how far you can twist and bend, it's about how it feels when you're doing it and how confident you feel in performing these actions. These things will influence your pain in the long term.

Thoughts and Feelings

The final part of the assessment looks more in depth at your thoughts and feelings.

I just want you to make a note of these important thoughts and feelings so you can reflect upon them after each of the online workshops. Remember your thoughts and knowledge have a huge impact on your back pain. Not just in my opinion but based on a significant number of mainstream scientific research studies.

What do you think is causing your pain?

What do you think pain means?

Do you feel confident to exercise in the presence of some back pain?

What do you think pain means?

Do you feel confident to exercise in the presence of some back pain?

How is your life being limited by your back pain?

Are relationships being affected?

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Any further notes?