



THE PHYSIO CLINIC

Movement Health Performance

THORACIC AND MID BACK PAIN

The spinal column consists of 24 vertebrae connected by discs at the front and facet joints at the back. The discs help to absorb load and the facet joints give flexibility.

The thoracic spine is the mid portion of the back from the base of the neck to the bottom of the rib cage, specifically the top 12 vertebrae of the spine. The thoracic spine has less movement compared to the other parts of the spine, with each vertebrae attaches to a rib.

Kyphosis describes the normal curvature of the thoracic spine, the lumbar and cervical have a **lordotic** curve.

Hyperkyphosis is the excessive curve of the spine that causes excessive wear and tear on the disks, vertebra and soft tissues.

Symptoms are similar to other types of back pain:

- Stiffness
- Limited range of motion
- Muscle spasms
- Muscle weakness
- Stooped posture
- Nerve pain – radiating around the sides
- Stooped posture

Physiotherapy and massage can help to relieve symptoms. Exercises, manipulations and stretches can help to regain movement and reduce stiffness and spasms, whilst massage can help to relax the soft tissues surrounding and ease the pain.

Common Causes:

Muscle Tension – prolonged periods of poor posture, sedentary lifestyle with lack of movement and exercise.

Commonly seen in office-based jobs with prolonged periods of sitting

Twists and Sprains – incorrect position of sleeping, posture and whilst working out can all be a contributing factor

Repetitive Motions – repetitive motions lead to overuse of a muscle that causes injuries, repeatedly lifting, twisting and bending can have a contribution.

What you can do for simple pain:

Keep Moving – stay active and continue daily activities as much as possible. Avoid sitting for long periods of time and be aware of your posture if sat at a desk

Hot/Cold therapy – both universal pain relievers, heat can help to relax the muscles and ease tension. Remember do not put apply ice directly to skin.

Physiotherapy – help to manage and improve pain, strength and flexibility through a variety of treatments and exercise prescription. It also helps to prevent reoccurrence and improve education and knowledge.

Useful exercises / stretches:

THREAD THE NEEDLE – start on all four point on hands and knees. With one arm reach under the other as far as possible rotating and rounding the upper back, looking in the direction of your hand.



THORACIC ROTATIONS - start on all fours and place one hand on side of head with elbow elevated. Lift elbow and behind while you rotate through your thoracic region.



THORACIC EXTENSIONS – place the foam roller on the floor at shoulder blade level and lie on your back with knees bent. With arms behind head lower your head as close to the floor as you can



WINDMILLS - lie on your side with hips and knees bent in front of you, both hands placed in front of chest. Keep bottom arm on the floor, roll back and towards the floor opening up the chest thinking about bringing the shoulder blade to the floor

