

Low Back Pain and Cycling

Why do I get back pain on my bike??

Apart from crashes and collisions, cycling is almost impact free, therefore great for your joints and muscles! Although these are great advantages, a study found that 51% of the tested professional road cyclists suffered from lower back pain. There may be several reasons that you too might be experiencing low back pain when cycling;

1. Bike Set Up: Choose a bike frame that is suitable to your body measurements.

This will ensure correct riding position and minimize unnecessary tension and loading through the lower back. Remember that even the smallest deviance from correct bike set up can be substantial when this incorrect position accumulates over prolonged rides. You also need a **bike fit** to make those small adjustments to ensure you fit your bike and learn what you can do to make it fit well!

2. Muscular Fatigue: Prime movers while cycling are the hamstring muscles. A study found that as cyclists become fatigued, the quality of movement in the hamstrings are reduced. This in turn, reduces the integrity of spinal position resulting in lower (lumbar) back pain. It is important to remember to continue with proper posture and a neutral spine position, even when fatigued.

3. Excessive Spinal Flexion: Another study found that prolonged periods of static flexion of the lumbar region resulted in ineffective use of the lower back stabilizing muscles. This leads to poor posture and lower back pain. It is important not to “over bend” when biking as this excessive flexion irritates chronic painful backs and can create **acute back pain and neck pain!**

4. Over-Active Anterior Chain: “Tight” hip flexors and an over activated anterior chain can lead to increased spinal flexion. As mentioned above, this will lead to lower back pain. To alleviate an over active anterior chain (and tight hip flexors), consider adding some static and dynamic stretches into your workout routine to elongate these muscles. Contact us at Body Works if you need help with this.



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Excessive Spinal Flexion & Neck Extension



We do numerous detailed measurements on the bike to ensure you are positioned well. Proper knee angle and pedal position can help prevent low back pain and hip pain.



Saddle height and handle bar height and angle should be correct for your body measurements. Also how you hold yourself and position on the bike is of utmost importance. Avoid too much forward bend of your back.

For more info and to view Body Work's **cycling videos**, please visit our website.

*part of this information was taken from: <http://www.cyclingweekly.co.uk/videos/fitness/lower-back-pain-dont-blame-the-bike>

info@body-works.ca Suite 420 – 233 West 1st Street, North Vancouver, BC V7M 1B3