

## Q&A

### **What should I wear?**

As with any medical examination, you will probably be asked to undress to your underwear, so please wear something you are comfortable in.

### **Can I bring a friend or relative?**

Yes – if you wish, you can have someone present throughout your consultation and treatment.

### **Does it hurt?**

Some soft tissue treatment may cause discomfort during treatment. Your osteopath will tell you what to expect, and will want you to let them know if you are in pain. You may feel stiff or sore after treatment. This is a normal, healthy response to the treatment.

### **Do I need to see my doctor first?**

You do not need to see your doctor first if you are paying for your own treatment. However, some insurance companies require you to see your doctor first. Osteopathy is available on the NHS in some areas – and national guidelines say it should be available everywhere for low back pain.

### **How much does treatment cost?**

The costs of treatment vary from practice to practice and across the country – make sure you ask before booking.

### **How many treatments will I need?**

The number of treatments you need depends on the condition and person we are treating. We aim to keep your appointments to a minimum. Your osteopath will be able to tell you within a short period of time whether they can treat you or if they need to refer you to someone else.

## Conditions we treat

### **The most common conditions that we treat are:**

- back and neck pain
- shoulder and arm problems
- pelvis, hip and leg problems
- sports and other injuries

However, patients have found osteopathy helpful for many other conditions. If you want to find out more, any osteopath will be happy to talk to you.



### **British Osteopathic Association**

- is the professional association of osteopaths
- promotes osteopathy to the NHS and the general public
- speaks for osteopaths throughout the UK

[www.osteopathy.org](http://www.osteopathy.org)

Tel. 01582 488455



### **The General Osteopathic Council**

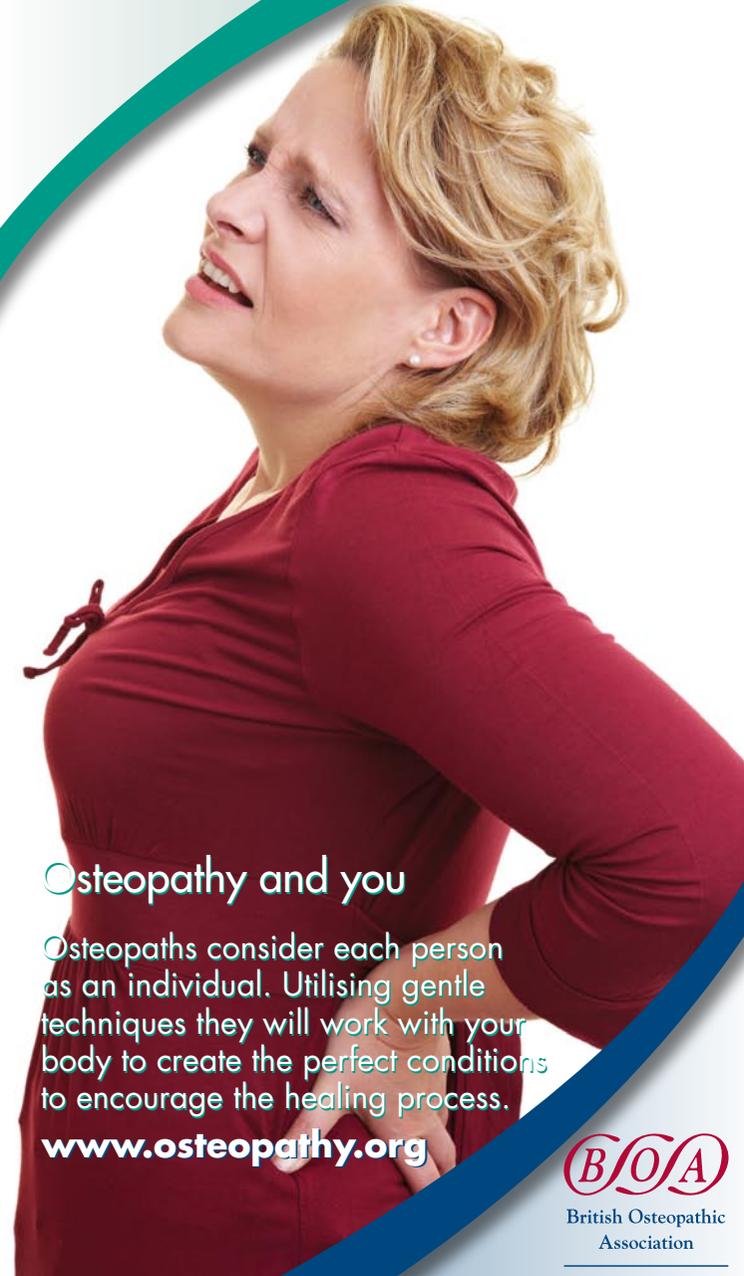
- regulates osteopathy in the UK
- promotes patient safety
- sets, maintains and develops standards of osteopathic practice and conduct

[www.osteopathy.org.uk](http://www.osteopathy.org.uk)

Tel. 020 7357 6655

Contact your local practitioner or access the above websites for further information.

# Back Pain



## Osteopathy and you

Osteopaths consider each person as an individual. Utilising gentle techniques they will work with your body to create the perfect conditions to encourage the healing process.

[www.osteopathy.org](http://www.osteopathy.org)



# Back Pain

## Professionalism and safety

To qualify, an osteopath must study for four to five years for an undergraduate degree. This is similar to a medical degree, with more emphasis on anatomy and musculoskeletal medicine and includes more than 1,000 hours of training in osteopathic techniques. By law, osteopaths must register with the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC). It is an offence for anyone to call themselves an osteopath if they are not registered.

The British Medical Association's guidance for general practitioners states that doctors can safely refer patients to osteopaths.

[www.osteopathy.org](http://www.osteopathy.org)

## Back Pain

Trouble with your back does not simply produce pain in the back. Often it may cause symptoms in more remote areas such as the buttocks, groin, hips, and legs (commonly called sciatica). Problems in the spine and neck can also cause symptoms such as dizziness, headaches, clicking jaw, pins and needles and many more.

Indeed research has shown that problems related to the back may affect over 60% of the UK's population at some stage in their lives.

Osteopaths are trained professionals who are skilled in diagnosing problems, including those which may require further investigation if necessary. Around 30,000 people currently consult osteopaths every working day with more than seven million consultations carried out every year (General Osteopathic Council). NICE (the National Institute of Clinical Excellence) guidelines recommend manipulative therapies including osteopathy for the treatment of low back pain.

## Your treatment

Osteopaths use a wide range of gentle manipulations, depending on your age, fitness and diagnosis.

Treatment is different for every patient but may include techniques such as different types of soft tissue massage and joint articulation to release tension, stretch muscles, help relieve pain and mobilise your joints. Sometimes, when we move joints you may hear a 'click'. This is just like the click people get when they crack their knuckles.

## Keeping a healthy spine and joints

When young, the body can adapt easily to the stress and strain it is put under. As it grows older (over 25 years!) it begins to lose some of the elasticity which gives the body the flexibility to cope and adapt.

In particular this applies to the discs between the vertebrae and the joint cartilage. These require regular movement to ensure their maximum range and thereby increase local circulation and nutrition to the surrounding fluids and tissues.

## 10 top tips for back care

1. Keep moving and stretching
2. Take regular exercise
3. Take frequent breaks between repetitive tasks and vary the rhythm
4. Change position – avoid 'computer hump'
5. Pace yourself when the work is heavy e.g. gardening
6. Adjust car seats, and on long journeys, have breaks and stretch
7. Watch children's posture – don't let them carry bags on one shoulder
8. Avoid strain when lifting especially when shopping and with small children
9. Is your bed the right bed or is it getting old?
10. Seek osteopathic advice earlier rather than later