

# Extremely simple secret to help prevent chronic back pain

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Scientists found that people who walked more were less likely to have lower back problems, and that longer walks had more pronounced benefits than faster walking.

'People who walked more than 100 minutes a day had a 23% lower risk of back pain than those who walked 78 minutes or less,' said Rayane Haddadj, a PhD student at the Department of Public Health and Nursing, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

The research results were published in the journal JAMA Network Open and quickly attracted attention.



It's no surprise that physical activity is good for back health, but until now, there's been little clear evidence on whether gentle, low-intensity walking actually helps.

'Intensity also affects the risk of chronic back pain, but the deciding factor is still the amount of daily walking,' stresses Haddadj.

The study involved 11,194 people as part of The HUNT Study (Trøndelag Health Research). What's unique is that the team measured both walking volume and intensity using sensors attached to the participants' thighs and backs over the course of a week.

Previously, very little research had focused on the prevention of musculoskeletal conditions. Physical activity has been shown to help prevent many diseases, and this study confirms that daily walking is a simple way to reduce the risk of long-term back pain.

'This finding highlights the importance of staying active – not just for preventing chronic back pain but for preventing many other diseases. In the long term, this could save society money on health care costs,' said Professor Paul Jarle Mork, NTNU.

## **Back pain – a common disease worldwide**

Back and neck problems cost billions of kroner each year and are one of the biggest cost burdens for the Norwegian health system.

In this country, 60–80% of the population will experience back pain at least once in their lifetime, and about 20% of people are suffering from back pain at any given time.

The causes of back pain are varied and complex, but the solution may be simpler than you think: just take a regular walk every day.

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