

SelfBack - App supported self-management

What is SelfBack?

SelfBack is a smartphone app designed to help reduce lower back pain through self-management. Based on the information you provide, the app creates weekly plans tailored to you. These plans include exercises, activity goals, advice, and supportive tools such as reminders and short messages. SelfBack is intended to complement the guidance from your healthcare professional. It does not replace medical assessment or diagnosis.

Why might I be offered SelfBack?

For patients with lower back pain, first-line treatment involves maintaining activity, use of heat therapy, and other non-pharmacologic treatments. Around 85–90% of acute nonspecific lower back pain cases resolve, with most improving within 8–12 weeks regardless of treatment. SelfBack may be recommended if you have lower back pain and would benefit from structured support to manage it. An experienced physiotherapist will help you decide whether the app is appropriate for your situation. Many people find that consistent movement, education, and routine-focused strategies lead to gradual improvements in pain and confidence.

- Your symptoms affect daily function
- You want personalised exercises and activity goals
- You prefer guidance you can use at home and fit into daily life
- You would benefit from reminders, encouragement, and simple tools that build healthy habits

App-supported self-management

National guidance for lower back pain emphasises the importance of supporting people to manage their symptoms actively. NICE recommends providing clear information, reassurance, and advice that helps individuals remain active, understand their condition, and build confidence in movement. The NHS also stresses that keeping mobile, maintaining daily routines, and gradually increasing activity are key to recovery. In contrast, long periods of rest or avoidance can slow improvement. App-supported programmes can help people put this advice into practice day to day. They provide structure, prompts, and education that reinforce recommended self-management behaviours. Overall, these programmes align with

national recommendations by encouraging safe, consistent activity and informed decision-making.

Are there any risks or side effects?

There are no known medical risks associated with using SelfBack. You may notice temporary muscle soreness when starting new exercises, which is normal and usually settles as you get used to the movements. If you experience a sudden increase in pain, new neurological symptoms, or anything that concerns you, please contact your GP or NHS 111 for advice.

Who should not use SelfBack?

SelfBack is not suitable for people who:

- Are under 18 or over 85
- Are pregnant
- Have had previous back surgery
- Have conditions that prevent them from exercising or being active
- Have serious mental illness or cognitive difficulties that limit participation
- Have been diagnosed with fibromyalgia
- Have terminal illness or end-stage cancer
- Cannot understand any of the languages available in the app
- Do not have access to a compatible smartphone

How do I use SelfBack?

Once prescribed SelfBack, you will receive an activation code by SMS. You will then:

- Download the app from the App Store or Google Play
- Create your account and verify your phone number
- Accept the terms and privacy policy
- Answer questions about your daily life and symptoms
- Review the introduction to your personalised plan
- Set your weekly step target and daily exercise time
- Follow the daily exercises, activities, and advice provided

Your plan updates every week based on your progress and the information you enter. You can continue normal daily activities while using the app.

Please refer to the SelfBack guide here: <https://www.selfback.dk/en/getting-started>