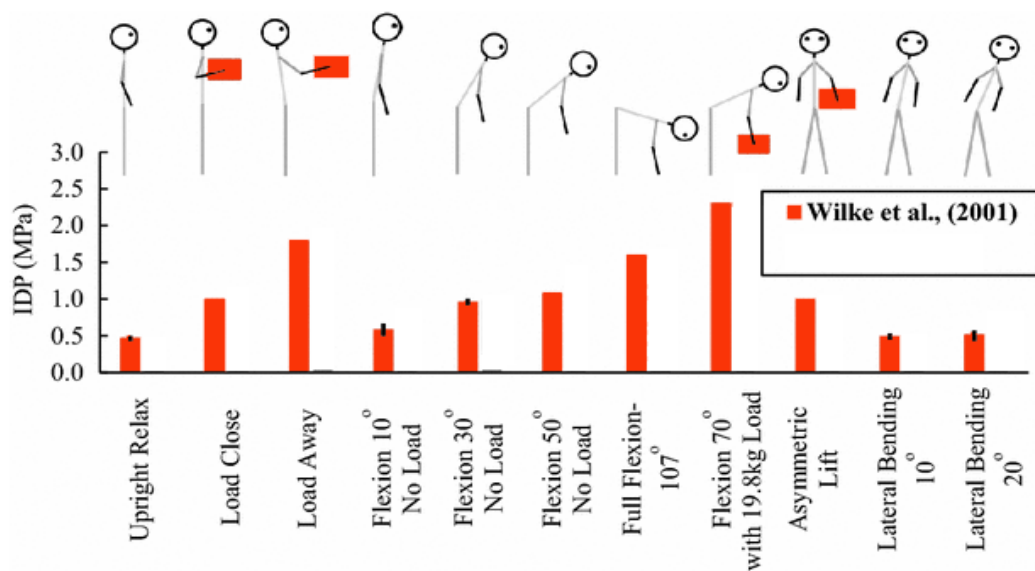


# Can exercise make a herniated disc worse?

A herniated disc is a common injury that can be very painful and disrupt daily life. The purpose of a vertebral disc is to absorb the pressures of daily movements, but when it has been injured, these same activities can cause additional damage. By giving this delicate structure adequate rest and avoiding exacerbating exercise, you can promote healing and prevent prolonged tissue damage.

In addition, to ensure a good recovery, it is important to avoid activities that put additional pressure on the discs between the vertebrae. This may mean avoiding heavy lifting, performing more intense exercises, or bending and twisting. Even activities that may seem harmless, such as sitting for long periods of time, driving long distances, or sleeping in certain positions, can also put excessive pressure on the discs and should be avoided if possible. At the biomechanical level, the researchers determined that the increase in compression load on the spine could be an important factor in the increase in intradisc pressure (hydrostatic pressure) and additional stress on the fibrous ring of the intervertebral discs, which will then begin to bulge and possibly lead to a worsening of your existing condition or the appearance of new lesions to your discs.



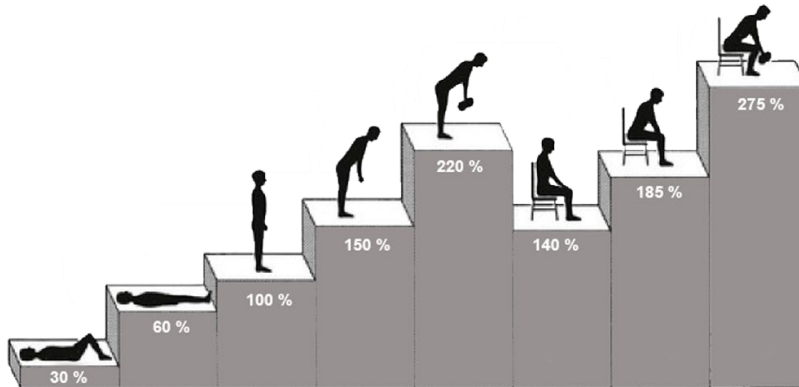
Graph illustrating intradiscal pressure under different circumstances: standing, leaning, lifting a load, etc.

## Five basic tips to protect your drives:

- 1. Avoid lifting heavy objects:** To protect your lower back, avoid activities that require lifting heavy objects (more than 15 kg) or bending at the waist. Bending the spine greatly increases the risk of injury and pain, so try to find other ways to move the heavy loads you may have to carry.
- 2. Do not wear high heels:** High-heeled shoes are not recommended for people with lumbar problems, as they put extra pressure on the spine, which can lead to misalignment of the vertebrae. Choose more comfortable shoes, such as sneakers or sandals, if possible.
- 3. Take frequent breaks when sitting** (every 45 minutes for one minute): Prolonged periods of sitting can be difficult on the lower back and do more harm than good. If you have a job where you sit for long periods of time, make sure you get up often and stretch or walk every few hours.
- 4. Avoid awkward positions:** When lifting or carrying something, try not to put yourself in an uncomfortable position, as this may strain the muscles of your lower back and cause pain or injury.

Bend your knees instead of leaning forward when picking up objects from the floor. Also, don't lift on one side either – distribute the load between both hands so that both sides of the body are used in the same way.

5. **Sleep with good posture:** you should always sleep in a neutral position, with the spine properly aligned, lying on your side or back (not on your stomach). This will help reduce stress and tension in the lower back, which will thus be able to relax completely during rest.



Intradisc pressure varies greatly depending on the position of your body and the load lifted.

Recent medical studies have revealed that too long a bed rest for a herniated disc does not promote the healing process.

In fact, prolonged inactivity can slow healing and even worsen your condition. The recent evolution of treatment recommendations, from rest to physical therapy, is clear evidence of this. While it may be tempting to stay in bed for days when your back hurts, it's best for your recovery to stay as active as possible by practicing light exercises while avoiding those described below.

When dealing with a herniated disc, it is important to understand how to facilitate its healing. First of all, it is recommended not to stay in bed for more than two consecutive days after feeling pain due to the herniated disc. While rest is an important part of the healing process, **staying too inactive can actually make your condition worse.**

On the other hand, staying active and engaging in regular physical activity is essential to help you heal faster. However, it is important to note that **overworking or overworking can also have negative effects and slow down the healing process.**



It is therefore preferable to find a balance between rest and activity in order to promote faster healing of a herniated disc. It is also essential to talk to your healthcare provider about your care plan so that they can advise and guide you on the types of activities best suited to your specific condition. Following these guidelines will help you get relief from your herniated disc as soon as possible!

For this reason, it's best to find a balance between getting rid of pain and avoiding certain activities, like the ones below.

## 8 activities to do in moderation to avoid aggravating your herniated disc

1. **Sitting too long:** prolonged sitting can be very detrimental to people with a herniated disc (the internal pressure of the disc will double after 45 minutes sitting). Be sure to keep your spine straight and shoulders back. Also, make sure your feet are flat on the floor and your thighs stay parallel to the floor; It can also be helpful to place a rolled towel or pillow in the crook of your back for support. It's also beneficial to take regular breaks every 45 minutes or so to get up and walk for a minute. If possible, consider using a standing desk, but remember to move at least once an hour, even if it's only for a few moments. These tips can help people with a herniated disc maintain the health of their spine and avoid the discomfort caused by prolonged sitting.
2. **Bending:** Bending and squatting are common activities that many people practice regularly. However, if not done properly or with too much force, they can lead to increased pressure on your discs and make your herniated disc worse. To prevent this from happening, it is best to avoid bending and bending down until the existing pains are gone. Common activities that require leaning are gardening, cleaning, lifting objects on the floor, and picking things up from shelves. However, when performing these activities, you should be careful to use an appropriate form to avoid straining your back. This means keeping your knees bent when lifting or carrying objects with your legs rather than your back, use a stool or ladder to reach something high, and use a cart or other device to move heavy objects. Also, if you have to do activities that involve bending over for extended periods of time, be sure to take frequent breaks in order to allow your body to rest.
3. **Do the laundry:** as you have to bend down to lift the basket, carry the basket to the laundry room, and then bend over several times before the laundry is finished. Ask a friend or family member to do this if you can.
4. **Feeding pets:** Although it is not as tiring as doing the laundry, you still need to bend over to feed and drink the animals. We might as well avoid this if possible.
5. **Picking up items:** When bending down to pick up lighter items, such as clothes on the floor, keep in mind that this can put pressure on your back.
6. **Vacuuming:** Vacuuming can be a painful experience, but with the right posture, you can avoid aggravating your herniated disc. To spare your back, hold the vacuum cleaner in front of you and move by walking rather than pushing and pulling – this small change will make all the difference!
7. **Gardening work:** For people suffering from a herniated disc, activities such as yard work and gardening should be done with caution. While light activity can aid the healing process, it is important to maintain proper posture during these tasks by limiting bending or twisting movements that could

worsen pain and hinder recovery. Ultimately, it is essential to carefully evaluate each task before attempting any strenuous physical work.

8. **Sleep as you normally do:** For those suffering from a herniated disc, getting restful sleep may seem like an unattainable goal. However, there are changes, which you can make to your sleeping position, that could alleviate discomfort and allow for more restful sleep! For people who sleep on their backs, place towels wrapped between the lower back and the mattress, while elevating the legs with two pillows under them. Side sleep is also beneficial – but be sure to change positions each night so as not to aggravate sciatica pain on either side related to herniated discs.



## Exercises to avoid with a herniated disc

Recovering from a herniated disc? Safety first! While it's important to stay active during the healing process, not all activities are created equal. Save yourself a few trial and error by avoiding any exercise that causes pain and take advantage of this list of resources for safer options – your body will thank you later! Some exercises can put pressure on the spine and worsen symptoms. To avoid further exacerbating things, these exercises should generally be avoided:



**Lifting weights:** To ensure your safety and well-being, it is best to refrain from lifting weights over 15 kg if you have been diagnosed with a herniated disc. However, you can do bench press or bench inclined at 45 degrees.



**Stretching:** For people with a herniated disc, experts suggest avoiding hamstring stretches for optimal back health. These exercises can be particularly taxing for the vertebrae already delicate in this situation and should be avoided at all costs.




**Sitting uprights:** Strengthening the core muscles is important, but this particular exercise puts excessive pressure on the lower back discs, which can further irritate existing disc problems.




**Squats:** People who have suffered a herniated disc should exercise caution when doing squats – this type of exercise can worsen the existing condition and produce undesirable consequences.




**Leg Press:** The "Leg Press" is an excellent exercise to develop lower body strength and tone; however, it is not recommended for people with a herniated disc. The "leg curl" for the front or back of the thighs is acceptable, one leg at a time alternating, with a light weight to avoid arching the lower back.


 **Jumping rope:** For people diagnosed with a herniated disc, jumping rope should be firmly avoided because of the potential stress it places on the spine. Changes in activity are required to facilitate recovery and prevent further injury.


 **Deadlifts:** Although "deadlifts" are an effective way to strengthen your posterior chain, people suffering from pain caused by a herniated disc should be aware that they may worsen their condition and seek other forms of exercise accordingly.


## Sports to avoid when suffering from a herniated disc


Take extra care if you have a herniated disc; Most physical activities should be put on hold until the injury heals. However, some sports can still be practiced safely – just be sure to stay away from those that are known to put unnecessary pressure on your spine. For optimal results, it is best to consult an expert experienced in the treatment of herniated discs who will help you identify the safest movements for your condition!


 **Any exercise that requires twisting:** When you suffer from a herniated disc, exercise can be both beneficial and harmful. To maximize healing while minimizing pain, any exercise involving twisting and bending at the waist should be avoided until healing is complete.


 **Contact sports:** For people with a herniated disc, playing contact sports like football, rugby, and hockey can potentially lead to additional injuries. It is therefore recommended to avoid these activities whenever possible.

 **Jogging:** If you suffer from a herniated disc, it is important to avoid activities such as jogging that could worsen your condition. High-impact sports like jogging can be tricky due to their bumpy and repetitive nature. Take the necessary precautions and focus instead on activities with minimal impact.

 **Aerobic training:** To avoid further injury, avoid high-impact aerobic activities with a herniated disc to ensure a good recovery. You can replace these exercises with the elliptical trainer.

 **Golf:** Golf can be an enjoyable activity, but if you suffer from a herniated disc, be careful. Twisting movements can lead to discomfort and potential exacerbation of the injury. So it's best to wait until you're fully recovered before hitting the greens!

 **Cycling:** Taking a bike ride can be detrimental for people with a herniated disc. The forward leaning position involved by the bike can amplify the pressure on the discs, leading to potentially serious complications. Therefore, it is better to give up this activity if you suffer from such a pre-existing condition.

 **Yoga:** When you suffer from a herniated disc, it is best to be careful when engaging in physical activities like yoga. Instead of risking further injury or feeling uncomfortable, consider other exercises that are better suited to your current condition.



**Swimming:** Swimming is a great way to exercise, but it can be detrimental if you have a herniated disc. To avoid putting pressure on your lumbar discs and aggravating the injury, avoid doing pool laps with your lower back in a strongly arched posture.



**Walking:** When you suffer from a herniated disc, it is important to pay attention to the choice of surface when walking. Asphalt and concrete can cause excessive impacts on the lower back discs. An alternative terrain that is softer and without too much difference in altitude might be suitable. Do not exceed your pain threshold.

## Exercises to avoid for cervical disc herniation

Exercise remains a crucial factor in avoiding herniated discs, but if you suffer from them, there are some specific activities that should be avoided. It is imperative to avoid exercises that put pressure on the spine or misalign your neck and shoulders; These can worsen the condition. Keep in mind that the same principles of twisting and impact to the lower back discs apply to those of the neck. For example, avoid carrying heavy grocery bags or performing exercises that involve lifting weights above the shoulders.

## Conclusion



A herniated disc is a serious injury that requires care and attention during the healing process to ensure a proper recovery. Taking precautionary measures, such as avoiding activities that put extra pressure on the discs between the vertebrae, finding alternatives for necessary tasks like lifting heavy objects or driving long distances, and making sure your sleeping position is comfortable but supports you while minimizing pressure on your spine, You can speed up the healing process so you can feel your best again soon! By taking the necessary precautions during the treatment and recovery period, people with a herniated disc have an excellent chance of making a full recovery!

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