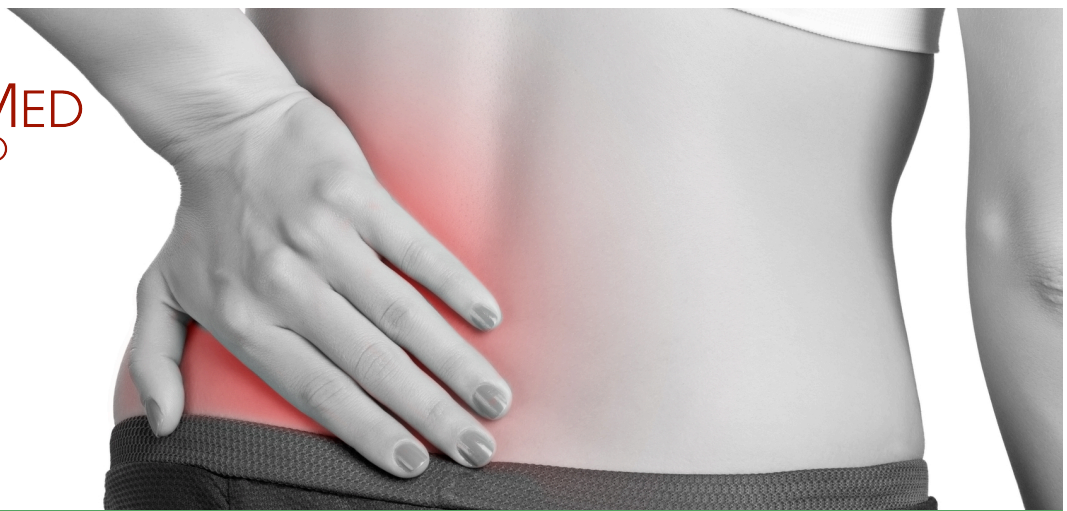




**SPORTSMED**  
SUBIACO

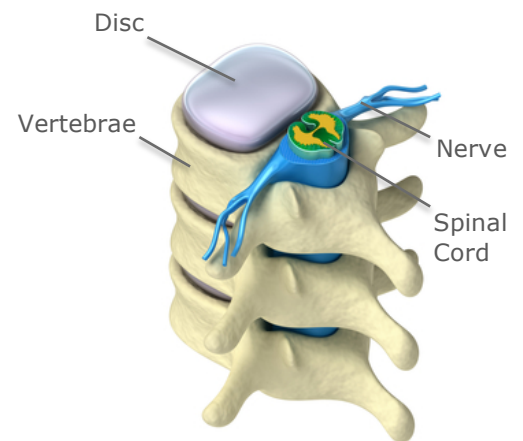


## Lumbar Disc Injuries

One of the most common causes of low back pain is disc injury. Most disc injuries respond to conservative treatment including a degree of 'relative rest', manual therapy, medication and specific exercises to promote recovery and restore normal movement patterns. Symptoms resulting from disc injuries range from mild discomfort to severe low back pain. In more severe injuries there may also be sharp, shooting pain radiating down one or both legs with tingling or numbness. Often symptoms are aggravated by bending, lifting and prolonged sitting. Accurate diagnosis followed by medical and physiotherapy management is necessary not only to facilitate recovery but also to minimise the risk of recurrence.

### Spinal Anatomy

The spine is an incredibly robust structure consisting of a stack of bones called vertebrae, separated by fibrocartilage known as intervertebral discs as well as an extensive number of ligamentous and muscular support systems. The spinal column starts at the base of your head (C1) and stops at your tailbone (coccyx). The intervertebral discs consist of a strong outer ring of fibro-cartilage called the 'anulus'. The central 'nucleus' of the disc is gelatinous in nature. With aging, there is a gradual loss of water content such that there is a transition from a 'toothpaste-like' consistency when we are young, to a 'chewing gum-like' consistency when we are older.



### Disc Function

The function of the disc is to allow movement, absorb the compressive forces associated with activity and redistribute pressure more evenly across the spinal segment.

### Disc Pathology

With periods of sustained flexion (eg. slouch sitting), bending or repetitive lifting there is a tendency for the disc to be overloaded. As a result, there is often a gradual deterioration and weakening of the posterior anulus. The disc is then predisposed to injury (annular tears → disc bulge → disc herniation) and subsequent development of low back pain. There is often a 'final-straw' incident involving movements such as bending, lifting and/or twisting causing an acute episode.

### Treatment

Lumbar disc injuries are best managed conservatively by regular manual therapy, specific exercises, postural and activity advice combined with appropriate medication. A thorough and extensive assessment will determine what needs to be done to resolve your symptoms, restore normal movement and achieve a swift recovery.

SportsMed Subiaco Physiotherapists have extensive knowledge and clinical experience with lumbar disc injuries and are committed to helping patients return to their normal daily life, chosen occupation, recreational activity or sporting discipline following disc injury.

## SportsMed Subiaco

Suite 101, 175 Cambridge Street, SUBIACO

Tel: 08 9382 9600 Web: [www.sportsmedsubiaco.com.au](http://www.sportsmedsubiaco.com.au)

| Sports Medicine | Physiotherapy | Clinical Pilates | Hydrotherapy | Gymnasium | Women's Health | Cardiac Rehab |