

Dear Employee,

Thank you for enquiring about **Back Fitness Group**. Please find below information about the group, medical questionnaires and directions for Townsend House and the Physiotherapy Department. To book, call **0845 600 1776 or auto 1776**.

What is it?

- Exercises and education aimed to help your back feel and work better

Who is it suitable for?

- People with low back pain of **more than 6 weeks**
- People with recurrent episodes of back pain
- If you have had back pain or a recurrence of back pain for less than 6 weeks speak to your manager about being referred for individual physiotherapy assessment*

When is it?

Before you start Back Fitness Group, you should attend the 'Back Fitness Education' talk. This aims to explain pain further, which will help you to get the most out of the Back Fitness Group. These take place on:

- Alternate Tuesdays* 1200-1400 Please bring completed questionnaires.
- Alternate Wednesdays* 1630-1830 Welcome to bring food for break.

Other education sessions (eg posture, lifting, muscles) follow the exercise sessions in back fitness group as these subjects are easier to divide into smaller chunks. These exercise and education sessions take place on:

- Mondays 12.00 – 13.30
- Tuesdays 15.00 – 16.30
- Wednesdays 10.30 – 12.00
- Thursdays 16.00 – 17.30
- Fridays 07.00 – 08.30
- Fridays 13.00 – 14.30

You should attend any 6-8 classes (ideally weekly) within a 3 month period to complete the course

Please arrive 10 minutes earlier the first time (except Friday 0700 class)

If you need release during work time to attend, then this must be discussed and agreed with your manager.

What does it involve?

The class consists of different sections

- Warm up/ down
- Specific spinal stabilisation exercises and postural advice
- Fitness exercises
- Strength and Balance exercises
- Education

Research has found that exercise improves function and pain in people who have low back pain. More recent research focuses on the role of the deep tummy and back muscles in working a little bit all of the time to support the spine. The deep supporting spinal muscles of people with low back pain have been shown to be smaller and slower. This doesn't automatically recover, and so increases the likelihood of future or ongoing episodes of pain. The specific spinal stabilisation and the balance exercises improve the size and speed of these muscles.

Fitness exercises increase endurance, boost energy levels, increase the level of the body's natural painkillers and feel-good hormones.

The strengthening exercises for arms and legs are to reduce the load your back takes when lifting. The stretches taught prepare the muscles for exercise and prevent shortening of the muscles as a result of exercise. Tight leg muscles pull on the pelvis, which in turn pulls on the spine, not permitting a good posture.

How do I book the classes?

- Phone our Physiotherapy Assistant on 0845 600 1776 or auto 1776

What is Expected of Me?

- To complete 6-8 classes on a weekly basis within a 3 month period.
- To continue with the exercises on a daily basis. It should add up to 15 minutes a day.
- You should start to **work at a level which is comfortable** for you, and then gradually increase what you can do. However, don't worry if you get some increased discomfort during or after the first one or two classes as your body gets used to doing more. This will improve over time.

Who takes it?

- The physiotherapists from OH Low Back Pain Clinic

What can I expect of the Physiotherapists?

- The physiotherapists taking the class should explain how to perform the exercises and give postural advice
- They are happy to answer any questions about the exercises and will check you are performing them correctly
- We look forward to meeting you and hope you find the class enjoyable and beneficial

Where is it?

- Physiotherapy Gym - 2nd Floor
- Townsend House, Greycoat Place
- Nearest tubes St James Park or Victoria

What must I bring?

- Clothes comfortable to exercise in (not necessary for the introductory education session)
- If you would like a shower, bring towel etc. You will need to ask the physio where this is.
- Completed Questionnaires - must be **brought with you to the class** (do not send/fax to LUOH)

Any queries, then please contact Physiotherapy on 0845 600 1776 or auto 1776.

DIRECTIONS:

From St James's Park tube take the Park & Broadway exit. Follow the signs through the shopping mall for Broadway, Victoria Street & New Scotland Yard. Exit the shopping mall, turn right & proceed along Broadway. At the traffic lights cross Victoria Street into Strutton Ground, follow the road to the end and turn right into Greycoat Place. Townsend House is directly opposite Costcutters. Back Fitness Group is held in the physiotherapy gym which is located on the 2nd Floor of Townsend House.

