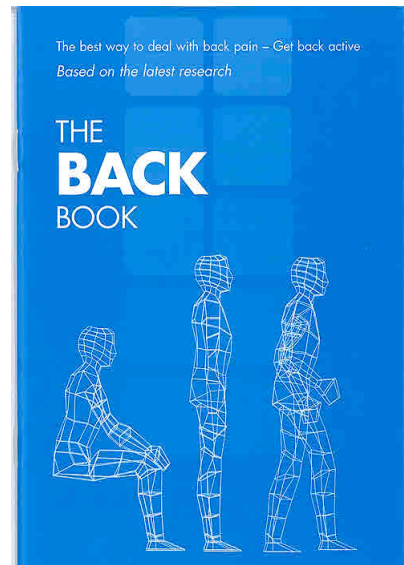


The impact of our '2011 Back Care Club' on health and attendance at work

As in previous years the back club was launched to coincide with 'National Back Care Week' that in 2011 commenced on Monday October 17th 2011. A total of 15 staff that had been unable to attend work in the previous 12 months because of an episode of back pain accepted an invitation to join.

Each person received a copy of 'The Back Book' and had the choice of joining a 6 week programme of core stability exercises.

The back club was held at Maes Glas and was led by the Health & Fitness manager. The first session was free and those who joined had the option of attending every Monday evening after work or for a lunch-time session held on Wednesdays. This back club was the 4th successive year that the programme has been offered to Bangor University staff.



Because low back problems are known to risk a recurrence within 6 months of the initial episode¹, a review of attendees' health has, as in previous years, occurred 6 months after the programme ended. They were asked to let me know whether they felt better from attending. Feedback included the following messages:

'Thank you for your email, I do still get some episodes of back pain but after the classes I have found that the episodes are not as severe and they do not last as long; I think this due to the fact that I am trying to strengthen my core muscles by using some of the exercises that we were shown'

'Just to say that the back club sessions have certainly helped ease the problems and strengthened my back, though I have to continue with the sessions to ensure that my back problem does not return'.

In addition to qualitative feedback, sickness absence records for all 15 members have been reviewed. Between October 17th 2011 and June 11th 2012, one member of the group required 3 days off work due to low back pain, the remaining group members did not take any time off work for any reason.

The cumulative effect of the past 4 years of sending 'The Back Book'² to staff who are off work due to back pain and encouraging them to join the annual 'Back Care Clubs', has coincided with a year on year reduction in sickness absence that exceeds 20 days.³

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Joseph Patton'.

Mr Joseph Patton - Occupational Health Practitioner
June 2012

¹ Bielanski, T. Nashelski, J. (2009) 'What is the prognosis for low back pain' www.jfponline.com

² 'The Back Book' (2008) TSO ISBN 978 0 11 702950 7 www.tsoshop.co.uk

³ Health & Safety Services Annual Report 2011 www.bangor.ac.uk/hss/inflink/annual-reports.php.en