

I'm not a robot



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pelvis, and hips. Other common symptoms are difficulty getting up from a seated position and trouble walking on an extended period without stopping etc. Type of Back Pain There are many ways to categorize low back pain. There are mechanical and radicular pain or acute and chronic pain. Mechanical or Radicular Pain The most common type of lower back pain is mechanical pain, which is caused by the muscles, ligaments, joints, or bones and around the spine. This type of pain is usually localized to the lower back, buttocks, and sometimes the top of the legs. It is usually initiated by loading the spine and may feel different based on motion (forward/backwards/twisting), activity, standing, sitting, or resting. The type of pain that radiates down the sciatic nerve is called radicular pain. This pain can be caused by inflammation or impingement of the spinal nerve root. The specific sensation of radicular pain is sharp, electric, and burning. It is often accompanied by numbness or weakness (sciatica). This type of pain is typically felt on only one side of the body. Actue and Chronic Back Pain Acute lower back pain is usually short-term, only lasting for a few days up to a few weeks. However, it can be connected to an identifiable event or injury. When acute back pain fades, there is usually no ongoing effect on mobility. Chronic lower back pain can last for months or even years. In many cases, there is no clear link to an initial injury. Back pain that starts out acute can become chronic. It's estimated that around 20% of acute low back pain cases become chronic. What is a TENS machine, and how can it help relieve lower back pain? A TENS machine can provide short-term pain relief by delivering low or high-intensity electrical impulses through electrodes or a conductive back support belt that you attach to the skin near the painful area. This helpful medical device won't 'cure' your symptoms, but it's a useful alternative or addition to pain medication. The low-current electrical impulses from a TENS machine disrupt the way nerves send pain signals to the brain, providing relief from aches and pains in the lower back. TENS units can be operated at low to high frequencies and at varying intensities, depending on how much sensation or muscle contraction you want to feel. Sensory intensity refers to a strong but comfortable sensation that doesn't stimulate muscle contraction. Motor intensity is when the effect is strong enough to produce a contraction in the muscle but not strong enough to cause pain. A study published in the National Institutes of Health found that different frequencies activate opioid receptors, which play an important role when it comes to reducing pain. But here's where things get interesting: at the spinal cord level, this device increases levels of inhibitory neurotransmitters known as GABA. Inhibiting neurotransmitters reduces the signals that travel between cells, which helps to alleviate pain. What's the best way to use a TENS machine for lower back pain? TENS, when properly used, is generally safe. If you think you'd like to try TENS therapy for back pains, talk to your GP first. The technique works differently for different people, and it's not for everyone. For example, your doctor may advise against using TENS if you have a pacemaker or you are in the first weeks of pregnancy. Read the instructions at the end of this guide before using the Tens machine. Here are the best practices for using a TENS unit: Depending on the size of the area you are treating, you can choose to use either 2 or 4 electrode pads. If your lower back pain is on one side and the area is small, try using two standard electrodes pads (Size: 5cmx5cm or 4cmx4cm), placing one electrode at the top of the pain and one electrode below (about 1 inch apart). Try to place the pads on the muscle, as opposed to directly onto your backbones. If you're experiencing pain in the middle or either side of your spine or the pain area is large, try using four standard electrodes or consider some large electrode pads (Size: 5cm x 9cm or 10cm x 15cm). Place one electrode on either side of your spine, about an inch away from the spine. Then, place the other electrode on the other side of your spine, again about an inch away from the spine. Bandage Tape can also be used to tape electrodes in place. Try different intensities and settings to find what is comfortable for you. Over time, as you become accustomed to using a TENS device, the sensation of electricity may lessen, but the therapy can still be effective. There are three mode settings: Continue, Burst, and Modulation. Continue ModeThe "Continue" setting is most commonly used for acute lower back pain relief. If you want to use the customized program, set the pulse rate between 70Hz - 120Hz and a pulse width between 170uS - 200uS. Modulation ModeFor back pain you have had for over a few weeks (chronic or persistent pain) - use the 'modulation' setting to prevent your body from getting used to the stimulation, which would make the unit less effective. Our Caremax TENS Machine has programs specifically designed for Back Pain. For reference, please click our program card. If you want to use the customized program, set the pulse rate between 2Hz - 10Hz and a pulse width between 170uS - 200uS. Burst Modeis an excellent choice for chronic back pain relief. The unit will deliver a burst of pain-relieving power, providing you with much-needed relief. Pulse rate refers to the number of electrical pulses you'll feel in one second. Frequency is measured in hertz (Hz). Pain relief can occur at various frequencies. For acute back pain, a frequency between 70 and 120 Hz is usually the most effective. Lower settings between 2 and 10 Hz can also be beneficial for chronic back pain, as they stimulate the release of endorphins. A setting from 35 to 50 Hz is widely used to stimulate muscles for strengthening or even relaxation rather than to relieve the back pain. Generally, the following settings are recommended for optimal results: 80 to 120Hz for acute back pain 35-50Hz for back muscle stimulation 2 to 10Hz for chronic back pain Width controls the on / off periods of the current. Most people find pain relief occurs in lower to mid ranges of time periods. Muscle stimulation needs a longer pulse width to effectively reproduce a muscle contraction. You can alter the time that pulses linger before resetting. The time period is very short. It is measured in microseconds u S (1 thousandth of a second). While you might not notice the difference, nerves do. The following settings are recommended for back pain relief: 175 - 200 us. If you have the unit on constantly throughout the day, it will become less effective. For best results, you can leave your TENS unit switched on for 20 to 40 minutes once every 2 to 3 days. For the most potential benefit, keep your TENS device off for at least an hour before bedtime. In general, if you're using your TENS unit regularly, you should limit yourself to no more than two to three treatments per day. After two hours, a TENS unit is not recommended because the electrical current might irritate the skin. Using Caremax TENS machine for Back Pain Mangement We provide a comprehensive packaging solution for Back Pain Relief. Discover the most sought-after products below essential for effective TENS therapy treatment. Caremax 2.0 Classic TENS machine Caremax 2.0 Pro TENS Machine Where and when to not use TENS machines TENS electrodes should never be placed: On the front of one's neck due to the risk associated with an acute drop in blood pressure (via a vasovagal response), or even a laryngeal spasm Across a pacemaker (or other electrical implant) because of the risk of interference with the device's function Directly on open wounds or cracked skin areas (although it may be applied around any area of the body, where the skin is damaged), such as burns, cuts, scrapes, sunburns, blisters, and so forth. If you're pregnant, or there's a chance you might be pregnant - TENS may not be recommended early in pregnancy Over a malignant tumour (based on experiments where electric current encourages cancerous cells to grow). Directly on the spinal cord (although it can be positioned on either side of the spine for back pain relief). Internally, except where specifically applied to oral, vaginal, and anal sexual intercourse, the use of TENS units is restricted to medical purposes. Epilepsy patients or history of heart disease. In areas of numbness, TENS can be used with caution because of the risk of causing nerve damage. It may not work as effectively on damaged nerves, and it may irritate the skin if current levels are too high. Are there any risks of side effects when using a TENS Machine? TENS is a widely used and effective pain management technique with few if any side effects. Some people may be sensitive to the electrical pulses used in TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation). They may experience an unpleasant sensation, such as tingling or burning, during treatment. Talk to your doctor about alternative treatments. You may also find special accessory designed for those who are sensitive to electricity, such as conductive glove, sock and belt. References Effectiveness of transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation for treatment of hyperalgesia and pain (2009) Pain Management. (2014.). "Using TENS for Pain Control: The State of the Evidence." - TENS machines have grown in popularity over the last few years for people living with acute and chronic back pain. Here's the real question: do TENS machines actually work to alleviate back pain? In this article, we take a look at the latest scientific and anecdotal research. A TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation) machine is a therapy device that provides low levels of electric current to relieve joint and muscle pain. The current feeds through connected wires between the machine and electrode pads which are placed on the skin covering the painful area. TENS machines range in size and can be plug-in or battery-operated. Although commonly used for back pain, TENS machines can also be used for a wide variety of muscle and joint pain located just about anywhere on the body. How Do TENS Machines Work? There are a few theories about how TENS machines work to combat pain. If the pads are strategically placed across sensory nerve fibers, then the electrical pulse can block pain information that's usually sent to the brain. Another idea is that electrical impulses contract muscle tissue to improve circulation. Lastly, a low voltage setting can release endorphins which counteract pain. Is It Useful For Back Pain? Although the use of TENS treatment dates back to the 1960's, there is very little empirical evidence that TENS actually works for back pain. Researchers first theorized that TENS treatment works under the gate-control theory. Electrical impulses travel along nerve fibers, closing a "gate" mechanism for pain in the spinal cord. If this is true, then pain will stop during TENS treatment but immediately return after the treatment is finished. Some studies compare the TENS treatment to a placebo effect. Results revealed conflicting evidence which supported the idea the TENS treatment may not work alone to alleviate back pain. Although the research is limited, clinicians and patients still find TENS therapy to be quite useful in temporarily taking away gnawing back pain. In order for therapy to work, you have to follow a set of guidelines for TENS set-up. Locate painful areas Palpate parts of the back (most likely with the help of another person) to locate the most painful sites. The larger the area of pain, the further apart your electrode pads will be placed. Apply patches Before placing the patches, make sure your skin is clean and dry so that the gel can adhere better. Place two electrodes diagonally from each other on your back (it doesn't matter which one sits higher) attached to the same wire. Then place two other electrode pads diagonally on your back attached to the same wire. You should have four electrodes making up an "X". Turn device on Securely connect the wires to the TENS unit and turn it on. Make sure you read the user manual for types of settings because each TENS unit is different in options and complexity. Apply intensity Find a simple setting to start with such as "continuous" or "IFC/wave". Some TENS units have you select which part of the body you are treating. Slowly apply intensity from 0 to higher. The electrodes should work off a mild tingling sensation. The setting is too high if your back is pulsating and contracting muscles vigorously. TENS units can treat sciatica pain. It just takes knowing about accurate pad placement. If the pain starts further up, place the pads on your lower back near the sight of pain. If the pain is radiating down your leg, place the pads along the back of your thigh. Play with the pad placements until you find that sweet spot. Let's talk about some basic information regarding TENS machines and appropriate times for usage, because let's face it, TENS therapy will not fit everyone's pain-related needs. How often should you use a TENS machine for back pain? Begin with only one 15-minute TENS therapy session and track your pain levels. Some sources say that you can use TENS up to 5 times per day in 30 minute intervals, depending on the extent of your pain. How long can you use a TENS unit? Since many clinicians find TENS therapy to be generally safe for private use, you can use the TENS unit for as long as you think it is helping ease your pain. Consult with your doctor if you have other health concerns that could negatively impact your TENS therapy schedule. How long does TENS pain relief last? Since the research is limited, and there is a wide variety of TENS units available, experts say that pain relief will usually last anywhere between 5 minutes and 18 hours after treatment. Do TENS units relax muscles? Yes. In conjunction with a light stretch routine, TENS units have the potential to help release muscle knots and tightness. The electrode impulses help reduce muscle pain, which decreases someone's guarding tendencies to allow for stretching and relaxing of muscle tissue. Can a TENS unit help with arthritis and inflammation? TENS units have been found helpful for pain associated with multiple forms of arthritis. Pads are placed above and below the joint(s) with the most pain in order to reduce inflammation. Since arthritis varies from person to person (osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis), it is important to consult with a doctor before starting your own in-home TENS sessions. Can a TENS machine help a slipped disc? Although TENS units don't cure or repair a slipped disc, TENS therapy can help reduce painful, affected sides of the body. So, your doctor has given you approval to purchase your own TENS unit for home use. Here are 5 items you should consider before committing to a product. Budget What can you afford? On rare occasions, health insurance will cover a TENS unit with a prescriptive order from the doctor if the device is medically necessary for you. Otherwise, you are on your own and have to consider what you can afford out-of-pocket. Modes Cheaper TENS units have less modes available, which means your options are limited for treating your specific type of pain. Find a TENS unit with a wide variety of massage settings for different parts of your body so that you don't feel trapped using the same, ineffective 1 or 2 modes available to you. Power level Everyone has different levels of pain tolerance, so you don't want to be stuck with a TENS unit that is not intense enough for you. Locate units that have a wide range of intensity, even if you think you won't need it. That way, if you work up a tolerance for a certain level of intensity, you still have the option to kick it up a notch without buying a whole new unit. Number of pads Check the product to see how many pads and wire hook-ups come with the unit. TENS units that can use up to 4 pads at a time is a good start. Also, check to see if the unit comes with additional pads. Portability Do you want to stay home and relax or do you want to be on-the-go with your TENS unit? Some are battery operated and are small enough for the purpose of portability. Choose the one that best fits within your daily activities. Since there are an overwhelming number of options available, we have recommended just three products to you start your research. Compex Edge 2.0 Muscle Stimulator The Complex Edge has 4 programs for strength-building and recovery. The unit comes with batteries, a case, and 12 snap-on electrode pads. Overall, reviewers have given the Complex edge a 4.5 star review. It's a little pricey, starting at \$105 on Amazon. TENS Unit and EMS Combination Muscle Stimulator This TENS unit is cheaper (about \$65) and has 12 different programs for back, shoulders, neck, legs, arms, and ab muscles. It's portable, comes with a 60-minute timer, and 20 intensity settings. Easy@Home Professional Grade Rechargeable TENS Unit The Easy@Home comes with 20 power levels, 5 automated massage settings, and 3 traditional massage modes. The rechargeable battery lasts up to 120-minute sessions, 3 times per day. The company offers a 1-year warranty and the unit costs roughly \$95 on Amazon. Assess your daily pain, talk to your doctor, and start researching TENS units to see if this avenue of treatment is right for you. Don't rush yourself and be very thoughtful before dedicating yourself to one product. TENS units are not meant to be a "fix-all" for pain, but the temporarily pain relief may be just what you need in order to get back to your day. If you're dealing with lower back pain, you may have heard about TENS therapy. A TENS unit, or transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation device, is a small machine designed to relieve pain by sending mild electrical pulses through adhesive pads placed on the skin. Here's a comprehensive guide on how a TENS unit works, where to place the pads, tips for optimal usage, and answers to common questions about TENS for back pain relief.What is a TENS Unit and How Does it Help Lower Back Pain?A TENS unit works by sending electrical impulses through electrodes placed on the skin. These impulses stimulate nerves in the targeted area, blocking pain signals from reaching the brain and stimulating endorphin release, which can help alleviate lower back pain. TENS therapy is commonly used for conditions like chronic back pain, sudden strains, muscle soreness, arthritis, and post-surgical recovery.Where to Place TENS Pads for Lower Back PainTo get the most relief from a TENS unit, pad placement is key. Here's a guide:Two-Pad TENS Units: Place one pad on either side of the painful area, keeping them about an inch apart. For pain across the lower back, position each pad on either side of your spine.Four-Pad TENS Units: If your unit has four pads, place two pads just above the painful spot and two just below. This placement allows for broader coverage, often helpful for extensive back pain.Tip: Avoid placing TENS pads directly on the spine, the neck, or areas with broken or irritated skin. Avoid placement near the chest, particularly if you have a pacemaker or heart condition.Step-by-Step Guide: How to Use a TENS Unit for Lower Back PainClean the Area: Start by cleaning the skin where you plan to place the electrodes with water or alcohol to ensure a secure adhesion.Attach the Pads: With the TENS unit turned off, position the electrode pads on either side of the painful area.Connect Wires: Attach the electrode wires to both the pads and the TENS unit.Set Intensity and Frequency: Turn on the TENS device, then select a frequency between 50 to 150 Hz. Adjust the intensity to a comfortable level - you should feel a tingling sensation without pain or discomfort.Duration of Use: Run the TENS unit for about 30 to 45 minutes per session, though some users may benefit from longer or shorter treatments.Turn Off and Remove: Once your session is complete, turn off the TENS device before removing the pads.How Often Can You Use a TENS Unit on Your Lower Back?TENS therapy can be used multiple times a day, as there is no risk of overdose. For chronic back pain, experts often recommend using the device up to four times daily, but always consult a medical professional for personalized advice.Precautions When Using a TENS Unit for Lower Back PainThough TENS units are generally safe, there are some precautions:Consult Your Doctor First: Especially if you have a heart condition, epilepsy, or if you're pregnant.Watch for Skin Irritation: Prolonged use of electrode pads in the same location can cause minor skin irritation.Avoid High Sensitivity Areas: Keep pads away from sensitive areas like the neck, head, and chest.Effectiveness of TENS Units for Lower Back PainResearch on TENS therapy's effectiveness for back pain is mixed. Many studies indicate it can relieve certain types of pain, while others show less consistent results. TENS therapy often provides short-term pain relief, which can be beneficial for muscle recovery and functional improvement.TENS Therapy for Various Types of Back PainTENS devices are used to address several types of lower back pain:Non-specific Back Pain: General pain in the lower back, often due to strain or fatigue.Chronic Back Pain: Persistent discomfort that may be due to arthritis or degenerative conditions.Acute Strains and Injuries: Helps alleviate muscle pain and promotes recovery.Post-Surgical Pain: TENS can support pain relief following certain types of back surgery.Where to Buy a TENS UnitYou can purchase TENS units at pharmacies, big-box stores, and online. They range from under \$25 for basic models to \$150 or more for advanced versions. While you don't need a prescription to buy one, check with your insurance provider - some plans may cover TENS units for specific conditions.TakeawayTENS unit can be an effective and non-invasive tool for managing lower back pain. It's easy to use, and proper pad placement is key to maximizing relief. While individual results vary, TENS therapy provides many users with temporary pain relief, allowing them to manage their back pain and engage in daily activities with greater comfort. Consult with a healthcare professional before starting TENS therapy to ensure safe and effective use tailored to your specific pain management needs. A TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation) unit is a popular device used for alleviating back pain. It works by delivering small electrical currents to the nerves, which helps in blocking pain signals from reaching the brain. However, the frequency of its usage is crucial to consider for effective pain management. Research suggests that using a TENS unit for 20-30 minutes at a time, one to three times per day, can be beneficial for individuals experiencing back pain. However, it is essential to consult with a healthcare professional to determine the appropriate duration and frequency of usage based on individual needs. Using a TENS unit should not be excessive, as prolonged and excessive usage may lead to a tolerance effect, where the body becomes less responsive to the therapy. To prevent this, it is recommended to avoid using the TENS unit continuously for extended periods. Additionally, it is crucial to follow proper electrode placement instructions provided by the device's manufacturer or healthcare professional. Correct electrode placement ensures that the electrical currents target the appropriate nerve pathways, maximizing the pain-relieving effects. Furthermore, using a TENS unit should not replace other essential treatments or therapies prescribed by healthcare professionals. It is best utilized as a complementary tool to support a comprehensive pain management plan which may include exercise, physical therapy, and medication. In conclusion, using a TENS unit for back pain can be effective when utilized appropriately. However, it is vital to consult with a healthcare professional to determine the optimal duration and frequency of usage. Additionally, following proper electrode placement guidelines and incorporating it into a comprehensive pain management plan will help achieve the best results. What happens if you overuse TENS? However, if long-term TENS is applied to the human body, it can cause muscle fatigue and the accumulation of waste matter, and serious muscle damage.Jan 9, 2015 How long does TENS pain relief last? TENS therapy usually helps ease pain during the treatment. But the level of pain relief following the session varies from person to person. Some people claim that they feel better for up to 24 hours after the session. Others say their pain returns as soon as they turn off the TENS unit. What are the disadvantages of TENS therapy? - Allergic reaction to adhesives. - Uncomfortable sensations. (Some people don't like the pricking, tingling feeling.) - Burns from the electrodes (rare). Electrotherapy has been around for ages, but only in recent years has this practice become accessible to all. While units used to be made strictly for use in professional settings, now there are portable, home-use options. With the increasing popularity of electrotherapy comes a slew of questions about how it works. One question that we get a lot at iReliev is: How often can you use a TENS unit?This is a great question, and one that deals with both safety issues and efficiency issues. From this theme we can pose several other questions that relate to the frequency of usage. Will TENS be more effective with more uses? Are there more risks with a higher number of sessions per day? How long can I leave TENS on? How frequently can I use a TENS unit without risking addiction?What are the Limitations for Using TENS?These are all great and perfectly natural questions. It makes sense that people should wonder what the limitations are. After all, for most other sources of pain relief, there are multiple rules that one must follow. For instance, most people have been warned not to take ibuprofen on an empty stomach. Every pain killer, whether over the counter or prescription, has a specific safe dosage that should not be exceeded.However, TENS is not like these drugs at all. TENS is an extremely safe and non-invasive alternative to these pain killers. Since TENS does not enter the body in any way, it does not have what it takes to be addictive in any way. Therefore the answer the last of the sample questions above is simple. There is no limit to how much TENS one can use before becoming addicted because there is no addiction involved with TENS.The non-invasive nature of TENS also means that there is no risk of overdosing in anyway. So, how often can you use a TENS unit? The short answer is, as often as you need to. TENS is designed to provide immediate relief from pain of many different kinds. The portability of machines like the TENS + EMS unit from iReliev is designed that way so that the therapy can be taken on the go and used throughout the day. When you're using a home-use TENS device as instructed, it's safe to use TENS as often as you need. With that answer in mind, it may be that TENS is more effective for certain patients with more frequent uses. Remember, TENS also encourages the release of endorphins with each use, which work as the body's natural painkiller.As to the question of how long one should leave TENS on for each session, that answer is equally as simple and convenient. Professionals usually suggesting making a TENS therapy session last for around 30 minutes at a time. However, there's no real danger to longer sessions as long as you give your skin a break from the electrode pads every 20 minutes or so. One of the only risks from TENS is the potential skin irritation that can come from leaving pads on in one place for too long.Now that we've answered "How often can you use a TENS unit?" it's worthwhile to mention that using TENS all day long isn't necessarily going to help a physical problem. If you're suffering from pain from an overuse injury or poor technique on the job or at work, you should meet with a health professional. He or she can help you come up with a stretching and exercise program that can help you heal the source of the pain. TENS is there to make it more comfortable along the way, whenever you need it and however often you need it. For lower back pain. Cross the connections. One red up and one red down opposite sides. The same with black pads. Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) is a type of pain relief therapy. It uses a low-voltage electrical current to block pain or change your perception of it.TENS therapy works well for a lot of people. And researchers agree that it tends to work better for some than others. But there's not enough research to explain exactly why. Researchers are still working to find out more information. Most experts believe the electrical current helps release pain-reducing chemicals that your own body produces.What is a TENS unit and what does it do?A TENS unit is a battery-powered device with electrodes that deliver electrical impulses through the surface of your skin. A provider places the electrodes at or near trigger points (muscle knots) or affected nerves.Many healthcare providers offer TENS therapy in office or hospital settings. They can also give you a prescription for a TENS unit to use at home. Or you can purchase an over-the-counter (OTC) TENS unit at your local pharmacy without a prescription.Regardless of the type of TENS unit you choose, it's a good idea to talk to your healthcare provider first. Many of these units have FDA approval, but it's important to choose the right device for your needs. Your provider can also give you guidance on how and where to apply the electrodes.Health conditions treated with TENSHealthcare providers use transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) to treat a wide range of acute (short-term) and chronic (long-term) conditions, including:Back pain.Osteoarthritis.Fibromyalgia.Tendinitis.Bursitis.Chronic pelvic pain.Diabetes-related neuropathy.Peripheral artery disease (PAD).