



Mechanical Back Pain vs. Spondylitis

FACTORS FOR COMPARISON	MECHANICAL BACK PAIN	SPONDYLITIS BACK PAIN
Onset	Sudden at any age	Gradual (typically starts between ages 17-35)
History	Pain caused by injury or strain	Not caused by trauma; pain due to spinal inflammation
Localization	Across lower back	Widespread pain from lower back, often into buttocks
Morning Stiffness	Usually not present	Often dominant symptom throughout the spine
Effect of Prolonged Rest (more than 1-2 hours)	Tends to relieve pain	Aggravates pain
Effect of Exercise	Usually worsens pain	Often relieves pain and stiffness
Sciatica (shooting pains down the back of legs)	If present, usually in one leg only	Not sciatica, but may mimic sciatic. Pain affects back of either leg. May alternate from one leg to other.