

The average Brit spends a HUGE 44 days sat on the sofa every year

- A quarter of Brits (24%) experience back pain every single day
- Millennials more likely to have back pain than pensioners
- Chartered Physiotherapist, Lyndsay Hurst offers tips on how to protect your back while on the sofa

The average Brit spends a whopping 44 full days (that's 1,060 hours)¹ sat on the sofa each year, according to new research². But bingeing boxsets on the couch could be having more serious implications, as a quarter (24%) of the nation admits experiencing back pain at least once a day.

Exploring the nation's relationship with their sofas, the study reveals that the average Brit spends 20 hours and 24 minutes relaxing on the couch per week, which means that throughout the course of a year, people spend just over 44 days sitting, lying or slouching on the sofa.

Additionally, one in 20 (5%) admit to spending a huge eight hours or more each day relaxing on the couch, whilst one in 10 (10%) complain they never get time to rest on the sofa.

However, according to experts, all this sitting down could be leading to health problems, such as back pain, with a huge one in four (24%) Brits admitting to experiencing back pain every single day. What's more, one in nine (11%) feel *constant* soreness in the back, while only one in three (30%) feel back pain as infrequently as once a year or less.

Surprisingly, despite being younger, it is millennials (ages 18-35) who are most likely to experience aches and pains in the back, with one in three (30%) feeling it daily, compared to only one in four (25%) pensioners (aged 65+).

In fact, it is people aged between 45-64 who are *least* likely to regularly experience back soreness, with only 19% feeling it every day, much less than the national average of 24%.

According to Chartered Physiotherapist and owner of [Your Pilates Physio](#), Lyndsay Hirst, however, "It is sustained postures that tend to lead to back pain, so as long as you get up regularly, change position, and exercise often, your risk of developing back problems from sitting on the sofa drastically reduces."

The research from FurnitureChoice.co.uk, also reveals the four seating positions in which most people prefer when perching on the sofa, alongside commentary from Lyndsay on how it affects the body. The most popular sitting positions Brits opt for on the sofa are:

1. **Twisted - Legs up on the sofa to the side of the body. Upper body twisted to face the TV/front of the room (27%)**

“The spine is twisted here, so being sat in this position for prolonged time may cause some discomfort in either the back or the hips. This position would cause additional problems if the person had some restrictions in their spine or pelvis, putting more strain on the facet joints of the spine.”

2. **Boomerang - Slouching low in the seat with no lower back support with legs resting on another surface (25%)**

“This slumped posture creates a curve to the spine that causes the fluid to be moved to the posterior part of the intervertebral discs, potentially putting pressure on them. The neck and shoulder muscles have to work harder than normal to keep the head upright, which could eventually lead to muscular discomfort. Sustaining this posture will also eventually lead to weakening of the back and abdominal muscles, which in turn may cause back pain.”

3. **Straight - Feet flat on the floor, back fully supported by sofa/cushions (24%)**

“Here the body is in perfect alignment: head in line with shoulders and spine, and hips in a neutral position. While this is an ideal seating posture, sustaining it for a long time will eventually cause discomfort, purely because the body is designed to move.”

4. **Slouched - Slouching low in the seat with no lower back support and feet on the ground (17%)**

“Just like the boomerang position, the back curve here puts pressure on the spine, while making it harder for the neck and shoulders to support the head. Additionally, the thighs are not supported which would again put additional strain on the back.”

While the twisted position is the most common way Brits tend to relax in the living room (27%), this position is favoured much more by women, with more than twice as many women sitting this way (37% vs 13%).

Dr. Diana Gall, MD and GP at Doctor4U, adds, “Luckily, most cases of back pain can be treated from home with pain relief, ice & heat therapy, and gentle exercises. You should make sure to keep your back mobile without aggravating the affected muscles or ligaments too much.

“Although back pain usually isn’t serious, it’s important to be aware of symptoms which might indicate that you’ve got more than a minor sprain or strain. Consult your GP if your back pain is affecting your daily life, stopping you from doing some activities. You should also make an appointment with a doctor if paracetamol and ibuprofen don’t help to alleviate the pain, as you may need stronger medication.”

Commenting on the findings, Interior Style Advisor at FurnitureChoice.co.uk, Rebecca Snowden says: "As much as we love relaxing on the sofa after a long day, it's quite shocking to see that it adds up to a month and a half each year! We'll definitely be taking these tips on board to make sure we're getting the most out of our time on the couch."

For more information on how to protect your back when you're relaxing and to sit in the most restful and comfortable ways, visit https://www.furniturechoice.co.uk/advice-and-inspiration/the-best-way-to-sit-on-your-sofa-to-avoid-back-pain_a10000050.

Notes to Editors:

1. UK average of 20 hours, 24 minutes spent on sofa each week multiplied by 52 weeks per year, resulting in 44 days, four hours and 48 minutes per year
2. Based on a survey of 2,002 Brits by 4Media

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