

# New tools for back pain prevention

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Prevention is another keyword for Genodisc teams. Physiotherapy and physical exercise have long been known as good prevention methods to avoid or reduce the emergence of back pain in adults. A prevention program in Hungarian schools showed that specific exercises could also prevent children prone to getting back pain from experiencing it. But mobility and physical activity can also be used as a cure. Behavioral therapy, tested in the UK, proved that some groups of patients got the same benefits from [physical exercise](#) that they would have from heavy and risky surgery.

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European researchers and clinicians are working hand in hand to unveil the mechanisms leading to back pain, likely the most widespread chronic pathology among humans. Until recently, it was assumed that disc degeneration was the main process behind back pain. The intervertebral discs are joints made of soft and very strain resistant material, placed between the vertebrae of the spine. New imaging techniques like MRI scans have recently proved the absence of direct causality between disc alteration and pain: some people have degenerated discs with little back pain, some have severe back pain with very little disc degeneration.

At the heart of the European "Genodisc" program is the idea of classifying the different groups of back [pain](#) patients, or phenotypes, to be able to identify the specific causes for each pathology. For the first time, medical doctors and fundamental scientists of nine European countries put together a huge database of 2500 patients. Each of these patients filled out a detailed questionnaire about the history and impact of back pain on their daily life. DNA samples and MRI scans complete the patient's files.

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