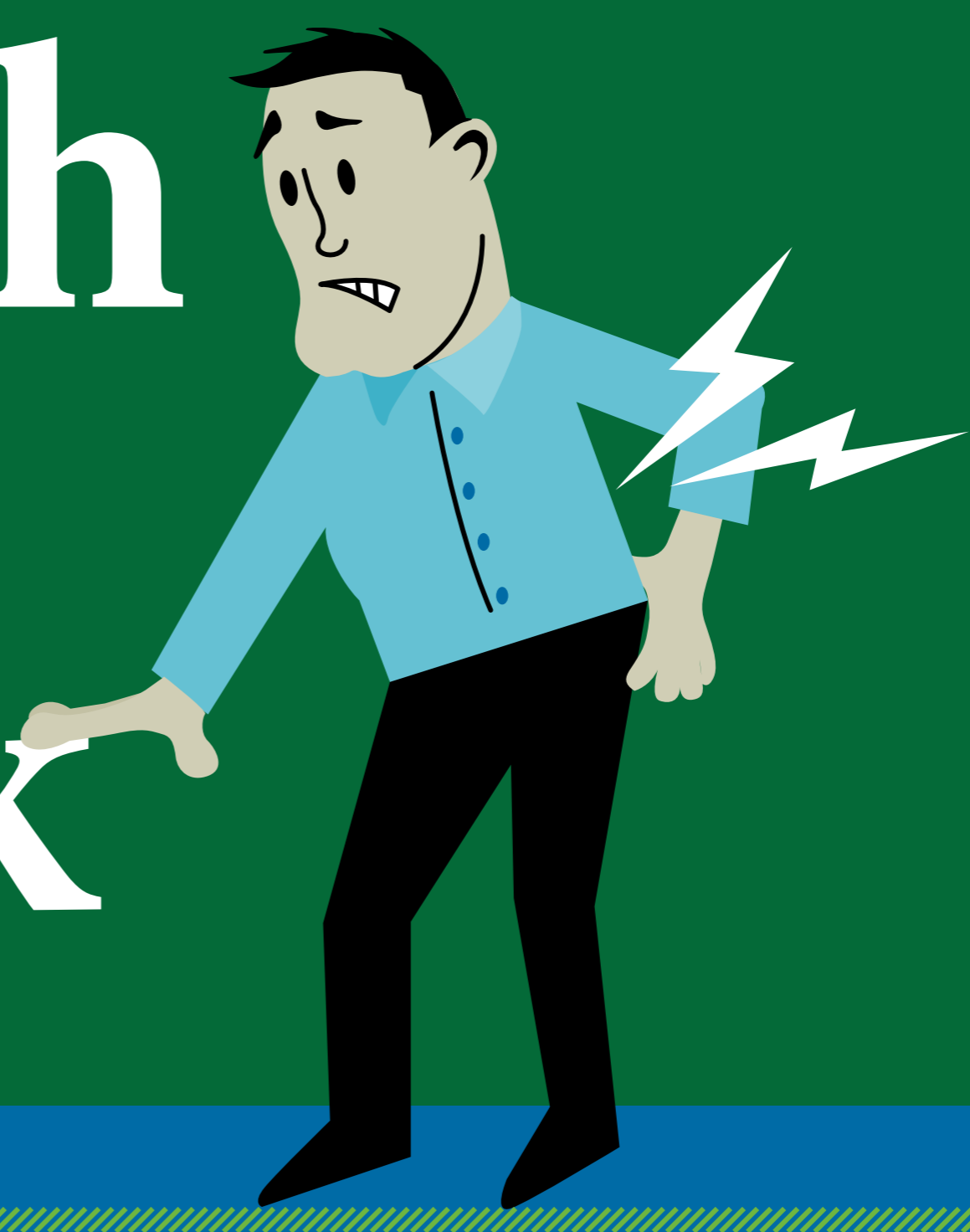


Watch your back



If you're one of the 13 million Americans who go to the doctor for chronic back pain each year, you know it's not something you can ignore until it goes away. Back pain is the second-leading cause of disability in people age 45 or younger, and even moderate back problems may cause soreness, discomfort and stiffness that can keep you from the day-to-day activities you enjoy.

There are things you can do (and not do) to help keep your back healthy, ease your pain and get back to living your life.

Dos:



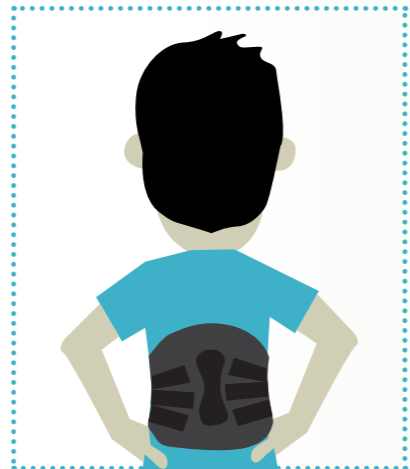
• **Do exercise** your abs to strengthen your core — and releasing endorphins through exercise relieves pain.



• **Do stretch** before and after physical activity — warm up those muscles.



• **Do try R.I.C.E.** to relieve pain — rest, ice, compression and elevation.



• **Do wear protective gear** during activities — prevent back injuries from happening.



• **Do use proper techniques** to bend, lift and reach — learn and use safety measures.



Keep your back on track

Take steps to steer clear of back injuries. [Click here](#) to see what you can do.

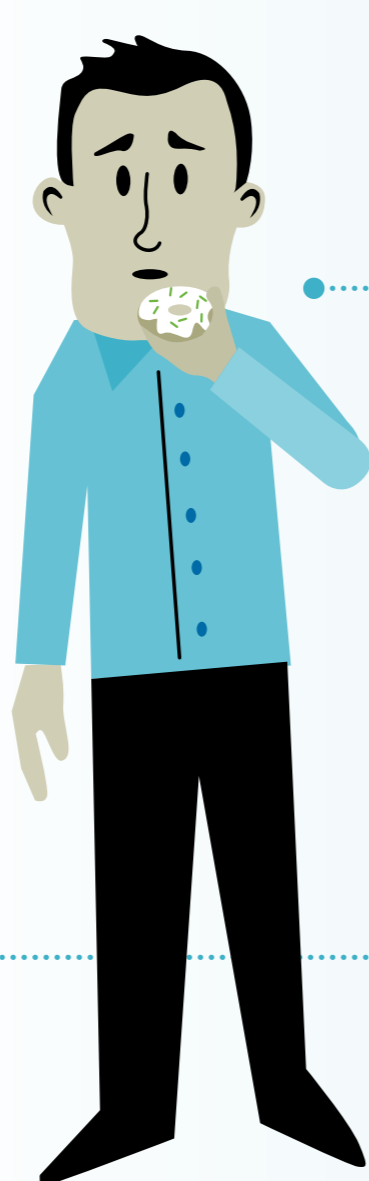
Don'ts:



• **Don't** carry or lift objects that are too heavy — remember, a small size doesn't always mean a light load.



• **Don't** lift with your back — bend at the knees and lift with your legs, keeping your back straight.



• **Don't** eat foods high in saturated fats, trans fats and simple sugars — these foods only make inflammation worse.



• **Don't** ignore back pain — talk to your doctor or work with a health coach to find out which care and treatment options are right for you.

We got your back

Need help managing chronic back pain? Get support from a trained health coach, available to you and your covered family members at no additional cost as part of your Railroad benefits. Rest assured, all support is kept completely confidential.

- › Aetna — Wellness Coach: **1-866-213-0153**
- › Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield: **1-866-267-3320**
- › UnitedHealthcare: **1-866-735-5685**

Coming next month: Straight talk about improving your posture

The material contained in this article has been selected to provide background and useful information. It is not designed to replace either medical advice or medical treatment. Always seek the advice of a qualified physician or health provider for medical diagnosis and treatment.