Avoiding back pain around the house

How many times does it happen? You are carrying the shopping in, cleaning the windows, making the bed or lifting your baby into the car seat and ...... ouch!

Back pain affects about 98 per cent of us at some time, but by following a few simple tips you can ensure that you can do those everyday household activities without pain or discomfort.

Hoovering – bend your knees and keep your back straight, and avoid twisting movements

Ironing – make sure the ironing board is high enough so you're not bending over it. Iron in short bursts. Sit down to iron – modern steam irons require much less pressure.

Making beds – don't bend over the bed to tuck the sheets in - go to the other side, or put your knee on the edge to provide support for your back.

Shopping – did you know that you handle each item of shopping an average of seven times between the supermarket shelf and your home cupboard?

- when pushing a trolley, if it makes you twist trying to steer it fully loaded, walk beside the trolley holding the side.

- carrying shopping, divide loads evenly on both sides. Don't buy too many heavy things at once.

- Don't bend into the car boot to take the bags out, but put your knee on the back edge to support your back when reaching inside.

- If your arms or shoulders hurt after each weekly shop, trying using the supermarket's packing or home delivery service or, if you can, order online.

Babies and children – care for your back whilst you care for them.

- When lifting babies and toddlers keep them close to your body, using your strong leg muscles to do the work of lifting while you hold your back straight.

- When putting your child into a fixed car seat, put one foot into the footwell and slide the child on and off your thigh into the seat.

- Backpacks – the weight of the backpack is transmitted through the pelvis so make sure the padded belt is tightened here first. The shoulder straps should be adjusted to keep the backpack against your back not to take the weight of the child.