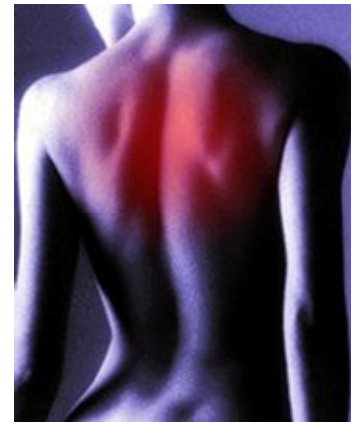


# Zone 3

## Central thoracic pain



Pain in this area has many potential causes. The big muscles in the back all come together at this point and pull in different directions. As a result the forces on this area of the body can be considerable, occasionally more than nature intended to tolerate. The muscles start to hurt, as chemicals build up within them. These chemicals, such as lactic acid, are irritating to the tissues, leading to more contraction, or “spasm” which is painful. This puts extreme pressure on the support structures in this area, the spine and the ribs. Where these two structures meet, the cost-vertebral joints, the pressure caused by spasms may cause damage. Stretching of the joints

and tearing of the capsule (the fibrous covering of the joint) leads to inflammation, causes pain. It also worsens the muscle spasm, making the situation worse.



The pain may be more on one side than the other. It can therefore mimic the pain of other conditions, of which the most important is pain of cardiac origin, when on the left side.

Treatment is to reverse the abnormal muscle pull, by protecting the damaged muscles and releasing them from the need to pull. A shoulder support can overcome tension in the muscles, pull the shoulders

back into their normal position and take the strain off the joints. Massaging the muscles with gel using an APPLICATOR will apply both local anti-inflammatory and reduce the spasm. If the pain is bad, or preventing you doing your normal daily activities, NUROFEN may help (always read the package insert).

The pain should start to improve within a few days, but the support for the muscles is required for much longer, until the posture is corrected. Physiotherapy exercises may help considerably in this, as well as improving posture. Visit [www.backzone.co.uk](http://www.backzone.co.uk) for information on these and advice on how simple changes to your posture can help.

Deep breathing exercises can help. Stand straight, preferably in front of a mirror to be sure you are symmetrical – take a deep breath, as deep as you can – hold it for 5-7 seconds – slowly blow it out through the mouth. Repeat this as tolerated. You should feel the muscles across the chest and in the abdomen pulling as you hold it.

Visit [www.londonspineclinic.com](http://www.londonspineclinic.com) for information on these and advice on other treatments