

## SETTING

Medical Clinic

## PATIENT

You are 86 years old and attend regular chair exercise classes as you have difficulty walking and use a walking frame. You are concerned about your lower back, as you felt some discomfort when you woke up this morning.

## TASK

- When asked, say when you got out of bed this morning, you noticed some slight discomfort in your back; you're concerned you might have damaged it.
- When asked, say the problem is in your lower back. You aren't really in any pain; it's more discomfort. When asked, say you haven't had any injuries. You went to your regular chair exercise class yesterday, but nothing happened during the class. You only noticed it when you got out of bed this morning.
- Say you're not in any real pain so you don't think it's necessary to miss a week of classes.
- Say now you're wondering if exercise classes are right for you; perhaps you should just give them up.
- Say you'll follow that advice; you're okay to start the examination.

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## DOCTOR

You see an 86-year-old patient who has limited mobility. He/she uses a walking frame, and attends regular chair exercise classes. He/she has come to see you about discomfort in his/her lower back. You suspect mild back strain.

## TASK

- Find out reason for patient's visit.
- Find out more details about problem (exact location, any pain, etc.). Explore any possible causes (injury, exercise, etc.).
- Give possible diagnosis of mild back strain (over-stretching of muscles/ligaments; not cause for concern, etc.). Advise on next steps (e.g., physical examination to confirm diagnosis, etc.). Recommend one week off exercise classes (e.g., not exercising when in pain, not ignoring pain, etc.).
- Stress importance of rest from exercise (e.g., prevention of further injury/strain, time to recover, etc.). Make further recommendations (e.g., heat pack, paracetamol/acetaminophen, etc.).
- Emphasise benefits of exercise classes (e.g., improved posture, maintaining muscle strength, boosting energy/mood, social interaction, etc.). Advise against overdoing exercise (e.g., awareness of own limits, etc.). Establish patient's consent for physical examination.