# Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) versus placebo for chronic low-back pain (2008)

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The best evidence in back and neck pain care

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# Overview of the study

Objectives

- To determine whether TENS is more effective than placebo for the management of chronic LBP

Methods

- Evidence current up to 19 July 2007
- Participants: Adults (>=18 years) with chronic LBP
- Intervention: Standard modes of TENS
- Outcomes measured
  - Primary outcomes: pain, back-specific functional status, generic health status, work disability, patient satisfaction, treatment side effects
  - Secondary outcomes: physical examination measures (e.g. range of motion, finger-to-floor distance, degree of straight leg raising etc.)

# Results & Conclusion

- Five trials (585 participants) included.

| Intervention | Evidence/ Quality of evidence* |
|---|---|
| TENS | Moderate evidence shows that work status and the use of medical services did not change with treatment |
| | Conflicting evidence on the effects of TENS in reducing back pain intensity |
| | Consistent evidence that TENS did not improve back-specific functional status |
| | Conflicting evidence on the effects of TENS on generic health |

⇨ Current evidence does not support the effects of TENS in the routine management of chronic LBP

* The GRADE approach was not used to assess quality of evidence.