

Home Exercise Program for Back Pain

Exercising your back regularly and properly (asides from maintaining ideal body weight) should be a priority once you develop a back pain problem. Always keep in mind that a flexible and stable back is the key to maintaining good spinal health. Back pain that doesn't resolve despite receiving treatments and medications or one that keeps on recurring despite periods of improvement is most commonly due to having a "stiff" and weak spine. Exercise goes a long way in helping your back pain problem in the long run.

A regular exercise program is vital in preventing further re-injury to your lower back; it is also helpful in relieving on-going painful muscle spasm and stiffness. Try to exercise regularly, three times a day (morning when arising from bed, during lunch break and before bedtime) on a DAILY basis. Do 10-12 counts for each exercise listed below. Start slowly with the first 4 exercise sets and progress to do all of them as you improve.

It is normal to feel a little bit of discomfort and pain when you start to exercise your back, but do not let this discourage you. Go at your own pace and stop if the pain becomes unbearable. Pushing yourself too hard in the early stages may actually lead to further re-injury and worsening of your back pain.

The exercise program given here focuses more on stretching and improving flexibility (recommended during the early stages of your back pain or if back pain is still severe). Do these exercises first as the first step to your back pain rehabilitation.

As your pain improves over time with treatments and medications given by the doctor, your program may progress to more intensive exercises in order to strengthen your spine (Core Strengthening Exercises). DO NOT DO THESE AT ANY TIME IF YOUR PAIN IS SEVERE ENOUGH TO LIMIT YOUR MOVEMENTS AS THIS MAY LEAD TO FURTHER INJURY AND PAIN. Core strengthening is best done in a controlled setting under the supervision of a Physical Therapist specializing in spinal pain. Your doctor will recommend to you the right time to start a more formalized Physical Therapy Program to strengthen your back and to prepare you to go back to your regular duties at work.

Exercises to avoid during the Acute and Sub-Acute stages of back pain:

- Full Sit-ups / Abdominal Crunches
- Resistive / Strengthening Exercises using free weights or pulled weights (Nautilus) especially if done in the standing position
- Vigorous, prolonged running routine (limited brisk walking is acceptable)
- Contact Sports (basketball, football, martial arts, etc)

Consult the doctors in our practice if you have any questions.

Exercise for low back pain

exercise for low back pain

Exercise is an important adjunct to your treatment. However, be sure to follow your doctor's instructions carefully. Do not overdo exercise, particularly when beginning. Start by trying the movements slowly and carefully. If the exercise causes some mild discomfort, which lasts a few minutes, do not be alarmed. This will disappear as your muscles become stronger. But, if pain is more than mild and continues for more than 15 to 20 minutes, discontinue exercising and speak to your doctor.

General Information

Wear comfortable, loose clothes. Do the exercises on a hard surface covered with a thin mat or heavy blanket. If it makes you more comfortable, you may put a small pillow under your neck. Always do the exercises in the order marked by your doctor. (Please note: Consult your doctor before doing these or any other exercises.)

Instructions: _____

Doctor: _____ Date: _____

Exercises for acute stage



Lie flat on the floor in relaxed position, bring right knee toward chest, clasp hands around the knee. Pull right knee toward chest firmly and, at same time, straighten left leg. Hold 3 to 5 seconds. Do 5 times. Repeat with opposite leg. Repeat 5 times or as recommended.



Lie on floor with knees bent, feet flat on floor, arms at sides, palms down. Tighten muscles of lower abdomen and buttocks so as to flatten the lower back. Slowly raise lower back and buttocks and hold 5 seconds. Relax. Do 5 times or as recommended.



Lie on back with knees bent, feet flat on floor, hands at sides, palms down. Tighten muscles of the abdomen and buttocks so as to push the lower back flat against the floor. Hold 3 to 5 seconds. Relax. Do 5 times or as recommended.

Exercise for low back pain

Exercises for Sub-acute/recovery stage



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Lie on floor with knees bent, feet on the floor and arms at sides. Bring both knees to chest, clasp hands around knees and pull firmly toward chest. Hold 3 to 5 seconds. Relax tension. Do 5 times or as recommended.



5

Lie on back, knees bent with feet flat on floor, arms at sides, palms down. Raise left leg up as far as comfortable without overstretching muscles behind the leg. Return left leg to starting position and repeat 5 times. Repeat exercise with right leg. Do 5 times or as recommended.



6

Lie flat on back, arms at sides, palms down. Slowly raise left leg, bringing raised leg toward the opposite side of the body until you feel the stretch. Repeat with right leg. Do 5 times or as recommended.



7

Stand with hands against wall, left leg approximately 18 inches behind right foot, keep heel flat on floor and left knee straight. Slowly bend forward until you feel the stretch behind the calf. Hold 3 to 5 seconds. Release tension and repeat 3 to 5 times. Repeat with opposite leg.



8

Lie flat on floor, hands clasped behind neck, knees bent, feet flat on floor. Tighten buttocks and at the same time lift head and shoulders 2 to 4 inches off floor, without pulling on neck. Hold 3 to 5 seconds. Repeat 5 times or as recommended.