

FAQs

Back Pain Exercises

Exercises to minimize problems with back pain

You can minimize problems with back pain with exercises that make the muscles in your back, stomach, hips and thighs strong and flexible. Some people keep in good physical condition by being active in recreational activities like running, walking, bike riding, and swimming. In addition to these conditioning activities, there are specific exercises that are directed toward strengthening and stretching your back, stomach, hip and thigh muscles.

Before beginning any exercise program, you should discuss the program and follow the doctor's advice. It is important to exercise regularly, every other day. Before exercising you should warm up with slow, rhythmic exercises; if you haven't exercised in some time, you can warm up by walking. Inhale deeply before each repetition of an exercise and exhale when performing each repetition.

Exercises to strengthen your muscles

Wall slides to strengthen back, hip, and leg muscles



Stand with your back against a wall and feet shoulder-width apart. Slide down into a crouch with knees bent to about 90 degrees. Count to five and slide back up the wall. Repeat 5 times.

Leg raises to strengthen back and hip muscles.

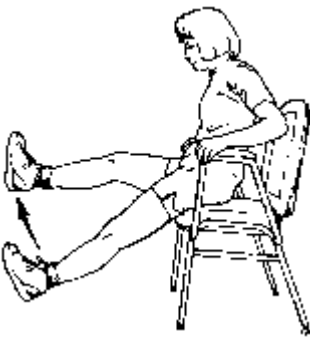


Lie on your stomach. Tighten the muscles in one leg and raise it from the floor. Hold your leg up for a count of 10 and return it to the floor. Do the same with the other leg. Repeat five times with each leg.

Leg raises to strengthen stomach and hip muscles



Lie on your back with your arms at your sides. Lift one leg off the floor. Hold your leg up for a count of 10 and return it to the floor. Do the same with the other leg. Repeat five times with each leg. If that is too difficult, keep one knee bent and the foot flat on the ground while raising the leg.



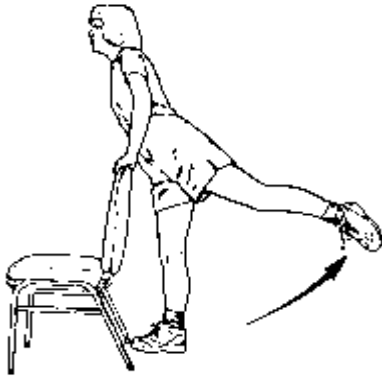
You can also sit upright in a chair with legs straight and extended at an angle to the floor. Lift one leg waist high. Slowly return your leg to the floor. Do the same with the other leg. Repeat five times with each leg.

Partial sit-up to strengthen stomach muscles



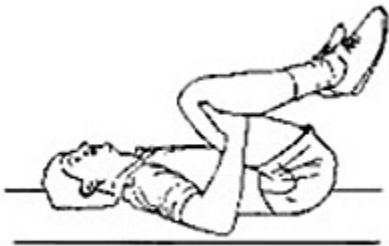
Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on floor. Slowly raise your head and shoulders off the floor and reach with both hands toward your knees. Count to 10. Repeat five times.

Back leg swing to strengthen hip and back muscles



Stand behind a chair with your hands on the back of the chair. Lift one leg back and up while keeping the knee straight. Return slowly. Raise other leg and return. Repeat five times with each leg.

Exercises to decrease the strain on your back



Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on your bed or floor. Raise your knees toward your chest. Place both hands under your knees and gently pull your knees as close to your chest as possible. Do not raise your head. Do not straighten your legs as you lower them. Start with five repetitions, several times a day.



Stand with your feet slightly apart. Place your hands in the small of your back. Keep your knees straight. Bend backwards at the waist as far as possible and hold the position for one or two seconds.

Low Back Exercise Guide

Regular exercises to restore the strength of your back and a gradual return to everyday activities are important for your full recovery. Your physician and physical therapist may recommend that you exercise 10 to 30 minutes a day one to three times a day during your early recovery. They may suggest some of the following exercises. This guide can help you better understand your exercise and activity program, supervised by your therapist and physician.

Initial Exercise Program



Ankle Pumps - Lie on your back. Move ankles up and down. Repeat 10 times.



Heel Slides - Lie on your back. Slowly bend and straighten knee. Repeat 10 times.



Abdominal Contraction - Lie on your back with knees bent and hands resting below ribs. Tighten abdominal muscles to squeeze ribs down toward back. Be sure not to hold breath. Hold 5 seconds. Relax. Repeat 10 times.



Wall Squats - Stand with back leaning against wall. Walk feet 12 inches in front of body. Keep abdominal muscles tight while slowly bending both knees 45 degrees. Hold 5 seconds. Slowly return to upright position. Repeat 10 times.



Heel Raises - Stand with weight even on both feet. Slowly raise heels up and down. Repeat 10 times.

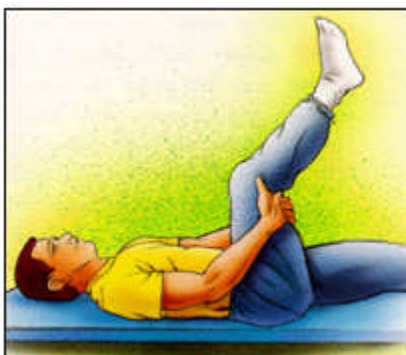


Straight Leg Raises - Lie on your back with one leg straight and one knee bent. Tighten abdominal muscles to stabilize low back. Slowly lift leg straight up about 6 to 12 inches and hold 1 to 5 seconds. Lower leg slowly. Repeat 10 times.

Intermediate Exercise Program

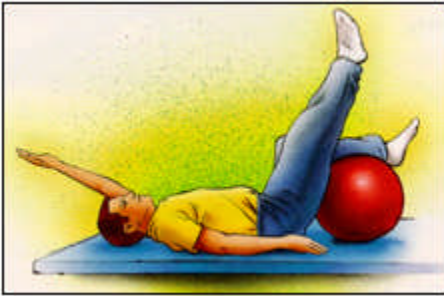


Single Knee to Chest Stretch - Lie on your back with both knees bent. Hold thigh behind knee and bring one knee up to chest. Hold 20 seconds. Relax. Repeat 5 times on each side.



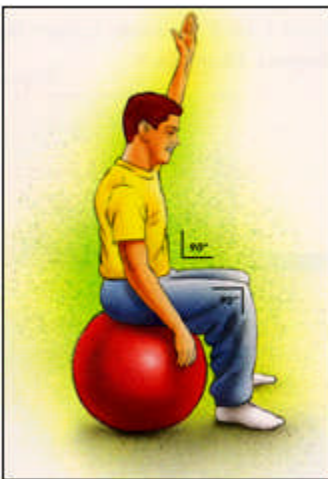
Hamstring Stretch - Lie on your back with legs bent. Hold one thigh behind knee. Slowly straighten knee until a stretch is felt in back of thigh. Hold 20 seconds. Relax. Repeat 5 times on each side.

Lumbar Stabilization Exercises With Swiss Ball - Abdominal muscles must remain contracted during each exercise. See "Abdominal Contraction" exercise from initial exercise program. Perform each exercise for 60 seconds. The further the ball is from your body, the harder the exercise.



Lie on your back with knees bent and calves resting on ball.

1. Slowly raise arm over head and lower arm, alternating right and left sides.
2. Slowly straighten one knee and relax, alternating right and left sides.
3. Slowly straighten one knee and raise opposite arm over head. Alternate opposite arms and legs.
4. Slowly "walk" ball forward and backward with legs.



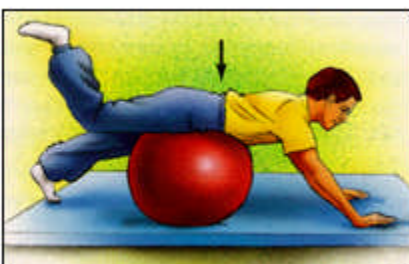
Sitting on ball with hips and knees bent 90 degrees and feet resting on floor.

1. Slowly raise arm over head and lower arm, alternating right and left sides.
2. Slowly raise and lower heel, alternating right and left sides.
3. Slowly raise one heel and raise opposite arm over head. Alternate opposite arm and heel.
4. Marching: Slowly raise one foot 2 inches from floor, alternating right and left sides.



Standing with ball between your low back and wall.

1. Slowly bend knees 45 to 90 degrees. Hold 5 seconds. Straighten knees.
2. Slowly bend knees 45 to 90 degrees while raising both arms over head.



Lie on your stomach over ball.

1. Slowly raise alternate arms over head.
2. Slowly raise alternate legs 2 to 4 inches off of floor.
3. Combine 1 and 2, alternating opposite arms and legs.
4. Bend one knee. Slowly lift this leg up, alternating right and left legs.

Be careful not to arch your low back!

Advanced Exercise Program



Hip Flexor Stretch - Lie on your back near edge of bed, holding knees to chest. Slowly lower one leg down, keeping knee bent, until a stretch is felt across top of the hip/thigh. Hold 20 seconds. Relax. Repeat 5 times on each side.

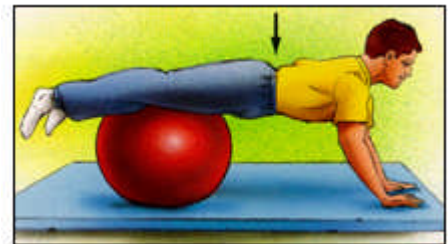


Piriformis Stretch - Lie on back with both knees bent. Cross one leg on top of the other. Pull opposite knee to chest until a stretch is felt in the buttock/hip area. Hold 20 seconds. Relax. Repeat 5 times each side.

Lumbar Stabilization Exercises With Swiss Ball

Lie on stomach over ball.

1. "Walk" hands out in front of ball until ball is under legs. Reverse to starting position.
2. "Walk" hands out in front of ball until ball is under legs and slowly raise alternating arms over head.
3. "Walk" hands out in front of ball and slowly perform push-ups.



Aerobic Exercises - Maintain spine in neutral position while stabilizing with abdominal muscles to protect the low back during aerobic exercise. **1.** Stationary bike for 20 to 30 minutes. **2.** Treadmill for 20 to 30 minutes.