

Low Back Exercise Program

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The following exercises are designed to gradually increase strength and flexibility in the low back and surrounding musculature. Continue to do the exercises after your back injury has healed. This will decrease the chance of re-injury and future back problems.

THIS PROGRAM SHOULD BE DONE ONLY WITH THE APPROVAL OF YOUR DOCTOR.

DIRECTIONS FOR EXERCISES

1. Study the position of each figure carefully before performing each exercise.
2. Discontinue any exercise which causes pain, until you can add it to the program without discomfort.
3. Complete 2 repetitions of each exercise, twice daily. Holding each for 5 seconds.
4. Perform all exercises smoothly, **NEVER JERK OR BOUNCE** from one position to another.
5. When an exercise is done to both sides of the body, complete the repetitions to one side and then repeat to the other side.

Exercise 1: Knee to Chest

Starting Position: Lie on your back on a firm surface.

Action: Clasp your hands behind the thigh and pull it towards your chest. Keep the opposite leg flat on the surface of the floor. Maintain the position for 5 seconds. Switch legs and repeat.



Exercise 2: Knees to Chest

Starting Position: Lie on your back on a firm surface.

Action: Bend both knees and put a hand on each. Pull your knees to your chest and hold for approximately 5 seconds. Relax out to arms length between reps.



Exercise 3: Pelvic Tilt

Starting Position: Lie on your back on a firm surface. Your feet are flat on the surface and the knees are bent.

Action: Push the small of your back into the floor by pulling the lower abdominal muscles up and in. Hold your back flat while breathing easily in and out. Hold for 5 seconds. Do not hold breath.



Exercise 4: Abdominal Curl

Starting Position: Lie on the floor with the knees bent, feet flat on the floor, and always rest your head on a small pillow between repetitions.

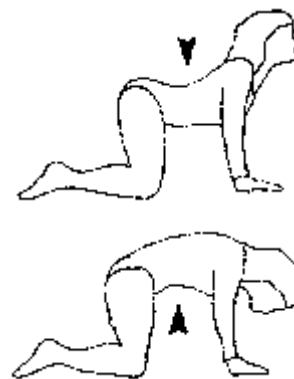
Action: With your hands crossed on your chest, slowly raise your head and shoulders as one unit, making sure the lower tip of the shoulder blade stays on the ground. Hold for 5 seconds and then slowly return to normal position.



Exercise 5: Cat and Camel

Starting Position: Kneel down on the floor and assume the "all-four's" position. Keep your head straight so that the gaze of your eyes is toward the floor.

Action: Slowly allow your trunk to sag as far as you can so that your back is arched. Do not pull it down but let it relax as you lift up your face towards the ceiling. Then round your back up at the waist as far as you can by contracting your lower abdominal muscles as you lower the top of your head toward the floor. All motion should be initiated from your low back



Exercise 6: Quadricep Stretch (Lying Down)

Starting Position: Lie on one side

Action: Pull heel to buttocks while contracting abdominals. Hold for 5 seconds. This stretches the quadriceps.



Exercise 7: Hamstring Stretch

Starting Position: Sit on a flat surface with the back of your leg on the floor.

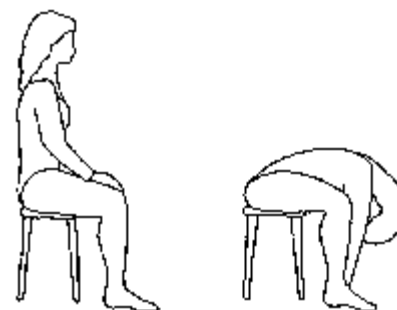
Action: Bend only from the waist. Hold for 5 seconds. This stretches the back of your leg.



Exercise 8: Full Back Release

Starting Position: Sit in a chair with your feet flat. Relax your shoulders and keep your head level. Your weight should be evenly distributed between your buttocks and your feet.

Action: Relax your neck. Curl your neck, upper back and low back slowly forward. Allow your hands to reach the floor so your palms are touching the floor. Hold for 20 seconds. Straighten up slowly so that you bring your head up last. Return to the starting position.



Exercises To Avoid

- ✓ legs raised straight and together
- ✓ sit-ups with legs straight
- ✓ hip twists
- ✓ toe touches
- ✓ any backward arching

Other Recommendations: