

A healthy back.

Exercises

Spinal Mobility Exercises - perform daily

Before you begin this or any exercise programme, consult with a physiologist or doctor.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- These exercises are designed specifically to promote muscular strength, endurance, and flexibility. They do not replace aerobic exercises
- If you have heart disease, see your physician before performing these exercises
- If you have any questions about whether you should do an exercise, consult a team member
- If you are unsure of how to perform any of the exercises, have a Wellbeing Advisor run through them with you. Doing exercises incorrectly can be harmful. Perform only those exercises you fully understand
- Should you experience pain or discomfort while doing an exercise, stop that exercise and go on to the next
- Remember to breathe normally. Try counting aloud while you are holding a position to remind yourself to breathe

Exercises can be performed while you are still experiencing pain, or when the pain is gone. If you are not sure whether you should do these exercises, please consult your Wellbeing Advisor, who may tailor the exercises to create a programme that's right for you. Combining heat therapy and exercise helps a great deal when it comes to lower back pain.

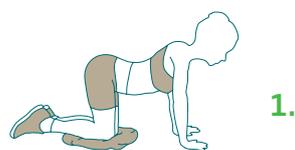
Cat Stretch

Starting position:

On your hands and knees on the floor, hands under shoulders, knees under hips, feet relaxed, eyes looking at the floor.

1. Arch your back, pushing your stomach toward the floor as far as it is comfortable. Tuck your chin in and look at the floor.
2. Hold for 10 seconds, counting aloud, then relax.
3. Round your back, pushing it toward the ceiling, and drop your head toward the floor.
4. Hold for 10 seconds, counting aloud. Maintain a rounded back as you do step 2.
5. Sit back on your heels, stretching your arms out in front of you as far as possible.
6. Hold for 20 seconds, then relax.
7. Repeat exercise 3 times.

NOTE: A pillow or cushion placed under your knees or behind your knees may be helpful.



A healthy back.

Exercises.



Side Stretch

Starting position:

Standing tall, feet shoulder-width apart, hands at sides, chin tucked in. Place your right hand on your right hip ("teapot pose"). Bend to the left, reaching down with your left hand toward the outside of your left knee.

1. Do not let your upper body bend forward.
2. Hold for 10 seconds, then return to starting position and relax.
3. Repeat 3 times, then do the exercise bending to the right with your left hand on your left hip.
4. Go through routine 3 times bending to the left, then 3 to the right.

Lower Trunk Rotation

Starting position:

Lying on your back, knees bent, feet on the floor, arms extended out to steady yourself.

1. Slowly roll your knees to the right as close to the floor as possible, keeping your shoulders on the floor.
2. Hold for 20 seconds, then roll to the left side.
3. Hold for 20 seconds, then return to starting position.
4. Repeat exercise 3 times.

NOTE: For those who need more of a challenge, bring both knees up toward your chest, lifting your feet off the floor until knees are over hips. Roll your knees to the right, and then to the left. Make sure your upper back stays flat to the floor.

1.



2.



Hip Stretch

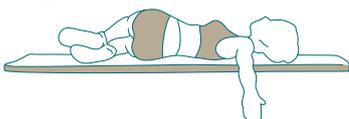
Starting position:

Lying on your back, knees bent, feet on the floor, arms at your sides.

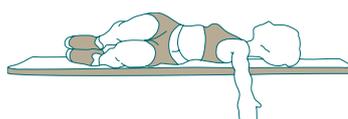
1. With both hands, gently pull your right knee to your chest (If you have arthritic knees or any knee pain, pull your knee up with your hands under it). Keep your left knee bent with your left foot on the floor.
2. Hold for 20 seconds, then return to starting position and relax.
3. Repeat 3 times, then do the exercise 3 times on the other side.
4. After doing the repetitions, pull both knees up to your chest and hold once for 20 seconds, then relax.

NOTE: For those who need more of a challenge, straighten the knee of the leg on the floor to intensify the stretch.

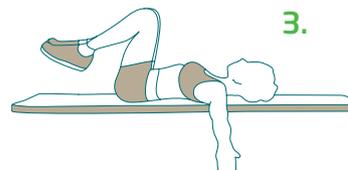
1.



2.

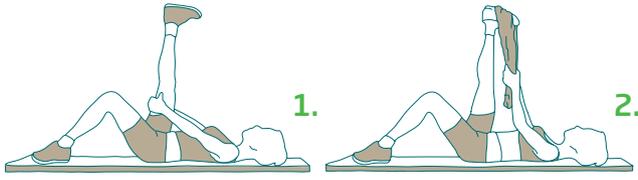


3.



A healthy back.

Exercises.



Hamstring Stretch

Starting position:

Lying on your back, knees bent, feet on the floor, arms at your sides.

1. With both hands, gently pull your right knee towards your chest. Take a towel and place around the ball of your right foot.
2. Keep your left knee bent and foot on the floor. Extend your right knee, pulling gently on the towel so that you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh and calf.
3. Hold for 20 seconds, then return to starting position and relax.
4. Repeat the exercise with the left leg.
5. Repeat exercise 3 times.

NOTE: For those who need more of a challenge, straighten the knee of the foot on the floor

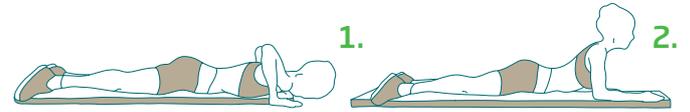
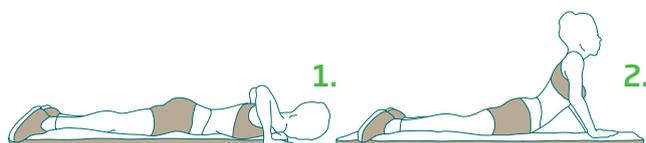
Extension (Full Press Up)

If this exercise causes pain during or after, do not repeat.

Starting position:

Lying relaxed on your stomach on the floor, arms at your side, head turned to the side.

1. Place hands palms down next to your shoulders. Push your upper body up off the floor, straightening your arms as far as is comfortable. Keep your hips on the floor and eyes looking forward.
2. Hold for 10 seconds.
3. Return to starting position and relax.
4. Repeat exercise 3 times.



Alternate Extension (Partial Press Up)

Starting position:

Lying relaxed on your stomach on the floor, arms at your side, head turned to the side.

1. Place hands palms down next to your shoulders.
2. Push your upper body up off the floor to rest on your forearms. Keep your hips on the floor and eyes looking forward.
3. You can hold an exercise ball between your forearms for upper body support if you need it.
4. Hold for 10 seconds.
5. Return to starting position and relax.
6. Repeat exercise 3 times.

Alternate Extension (Standing)

If this exercise causes pain during or after, do not repeat.

Starting position:

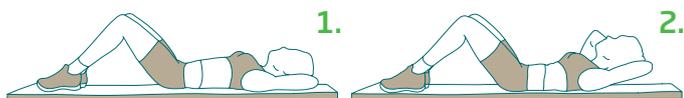
Standing tall, feet shoulder width apart, chin tucked in.

1. Place your palms on the small of your back, fingers pointing down.
2. Keep your head up as you lean back slowly as far as possible.
3. Hold for 20 seconds.
4. Return to starting position and relax.
5. Repeat exercise 3 times.



A healthy back.

Exercises.



Abdominal Strengthening: Curl Up

Starting position:

Lying on your back on the floor, knees bent, feet on the floor, hands resting beneath head.

1. Arch the small of your back up off the floor and push your stomach toward the ceiling. Hold for 20 seconds, counting aloud.
2. Flatten your lower back against the floor by tightening the muscles of your abdomen and buttock.
3. Partially curl your upper body in toward your knees.
4. Hold for 20 seconds, counting aloud.
5. Repeat exercise 3 times.

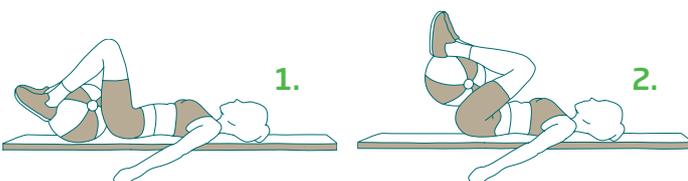
Lower Abdominal Strengthening

Starting position:

Lying on your back on the floor, knees bent, arms extended out to steady yourself.

1. Place an exercise ball between your heels and buttocks.
2. Flatten your lower back against the floor by tightening the muscles of your abdomen and buttocks.
3. Slowly bring both knees up toward your chest, tightening buttock muscles by digging the heels into the ball.
4. Slowly lower both legs to starting position. Repeat exercise 15 times.

NOTE: Do not arch back, if you feel any lower back strain, stop.



"The Bridge" Position

Do not perform this exercise if you are experiencing neck pain.

Starting position:

Lying on your back on the floor, knees bent, feet and elbows on the floor, arms extended out to steady yourself.

1. Flatten your lower back against the floor by tightening the muscles of your abdomen and buttock.
2. Lift up your hips and lower back to form a straight line from your knees to your chest.
3. Hold for 20 seconds, then return slowly to starting position and relax.
4. Repeat exercise 3 times.



Disclaimer

These exercises are for maintaining a healthy back, since it is not possible to recommend specific exercises for back pain without proper diagnosis. You need to decide which exercises are most appropriate for your needs. Nuffield Health strongly recommends you check with your GP or Physiotherapist before taking up a new back care programme if you suffer from back pain.