

BACK IN ACTION

Spine Rehabilitation Exercises

For serious back problems, do these exercises at least twice a day

WARM UP: WALK, RUN, OR BIKE FOR 30 MINUTES (WORK UP A SWEAT)

1. Shoulder Towel Stretch: (3 reps; Hold for 30 seconds). Hold both ends of a towel and lift arms over head and hold.
2. Standing Back Bends: (10 reps; Slow continuous motion). Place hands on either side of low back and arch backwards.
3. Stick Rotators: (10 reps; Slow continuous motion). While holding a broom handle or stick across the shoulders, rotate upper body on the lower body while keeping feet, hips, and knees pointing forward. Move clockwise, and then counter clockwise.
4. Hamstring Stretch: (3 reps; Hold 30 seconds). Put one of your legs on a chair or other object at a comfortable height. Keep knees slightly bent and the head up while bringing chest toward the knee. Keep other foot pointing forward. Repeat other leg.
5. Calf Stretches: (3 reps; Hold 30 seconds). Assume an upright stride position, left leg forward, left knee flexed, right leg extended back with knee straight. Brace both hands on a stationary object. Keep both feet flat on the floor. Slowly push hips forward and hold. Repeat for the opposite side
6. « Kneel Hip Flexor Stretch: (3 reps; Hold 30 seconds). Assume a « kneel position. Tilt pelvis to the back. HOLD. Repeat for the opposite side.
7. Prone Press Ups: (10 reps; Slow continuous motion). Lie on stomach with arms in the push up position. Slowly push head and shoulders up until there is

slight discomfort in the lower back. Return to the floor and then repeat.

8. Single Knee to Chest: (8 reps; Hold 30 seconds) Lie on back with head resting on the floor, and both legs extended. Raise left knee towards chest, and grasp the knee with both hands. Slowly pull knee towards chest. Hold. Repeat for opposite side.

9. Double Knee to Chest: (8 reps; Hold 30 seconds) As in #9 but with both knees brought to the chest. Pull slowly. Hold. Relax legs to arms length and then repeat.

10. Gluteal Stretch: (3 reps; Hold 30 seconds) Lie on back with head resting on the floor. Bend left knee keeping left foot on the floor. Cross right foot over left thigh. Bring left knee toward chest. Hold. Repeat for opposite side.

11. Towel Hamstring Stretch: (3 reps; Hold 30 seconds) Lie flat on back with head resting on the floor. Lift leg and place towel under foot. Grab ends of towel and assist leg towards chest with leg straight. Hold. Repeat with other leg.

12. Rotary Lumbar Stretch: (3 reps; Hold 30 seconds) Choose one:
ú Lie flat on back. Bring left leg over the right with knee bent or straight to rotate lower back. Hold. Repeat with right leg.
ú Lie flat on back. Bring both knees toward chest and then drop to one side to stretch lower back. Hold. Repeat on other side.

13. Partial Curl-ups: (30 reps) Lie flat on back with knees bent, and feet flat on the floor with hands clasped behind head. Lift head and shoulders off the floor keeping back flat. Return. Repeat.

14. Diagonal Curl-ups: (30 reps each direction) As above, but keep arms in front. Reach for outside of knee while lifting head and shoulders off floor. Repeat on the opposite side.

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15. Alternate Arm and Leg Lifts: Lie on stomach. Lift right arm and left leg off the floor. Hold 8 seconds and then alternate limbs.

16. Cat & Camel: (5 reps) Get on hands and knees, and let stomach and back sag toward the floor. Slowly arch back to the sky.

Love,

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