

COMMON CAUSES OF LOW BACK PAIN

Sprain/strain: Ligaments and/or muscles are torn and/or stretched.

Herniated disc: A slipped disc can pinch a nerve and cause back and/or leg pain.

Sciatica: An irritation of the sciatic nerve root can cause pain from lower back and buttock down the leg.

Osteoarthritis: “Wear and tear” arthritis increases as you age.

Muscle spasms: Muscles (or a group of muscles) tighten and contract, pulling on themselves and/or structures.

FACTORS THAT CAN LEAD TO (OR AGGRAVATE) A BAD BACK

Poor posture and/or bad positioning. Practice good posture whether you’re standing, sitting, or moving.

Stress. Practice relaxation techniques like deep breathing and yoga.

Inappropriate lifting. Bend your knees and use your legs, not your back, to lift any objects, and avoid heavy lifting. Do not twist while lifting.

Being overweight. Getting closer to your optimal weight will ease strain on your back.

Weill Cornell Spine Center

Providing multi-disciplinary services that include neurological surgery, pain medicine, neurology, neuromuscular medicine, and rehabilitation medicine.

Our goal is to get you feeling well again.

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YOUR GUIDE TO A BETTER BACK



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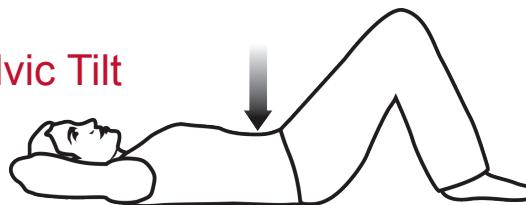
BACK EXERCISE GUIDELINES

- Set aside a regular private time for your exercises.
- Do not do back exercises when you have pain.
- If a particular exercise hurts you, don't do it. Try again in a few days.
- Do your exercises on a firm, comfortable surface.
- Try doing your exercises twice a day.
- Increase your exercises slowly, maybe adding one repetition per day.
- Don't expect immediate results.
- Be sure to WALK every day, at a comfortable pace.

Remember: Your own strong abdominal and back muscles are the best back support.

BEGINNER: DO FOR 2 TO 3 WEEKS

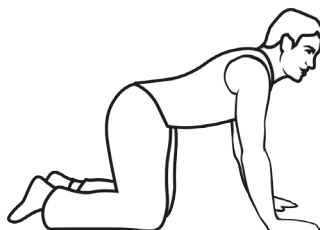
Pelvic Tilt



Lie on your back with your knees bent, hands behind your head, and feet flat on the floor. Press the small of your back against the floor and hold for a count of three.

Single or Double Knee Raise

Lie on your back with knees bent, feet on the floor. Raise both knees to your chest and pull them as close to your chest as possible. (You can also do this exercise one knee at a time, alternating legs.)

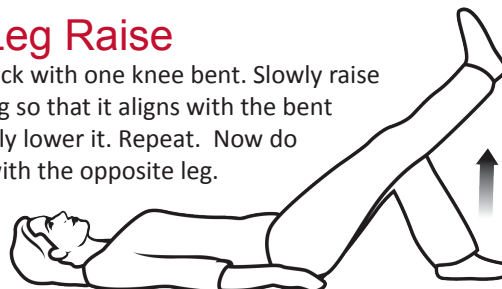


Cat-Cow

Start on all fours, with your spine in neutral position. Gently arch your back upward, return to neutral, then arch your back downward. Repeat.

Single Leg Raise

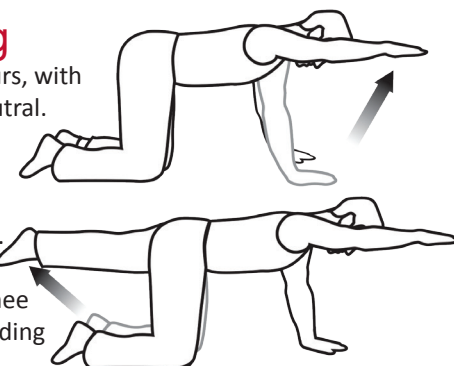
Lie on your back with one knee bent. Slowly raise the straight leg so that it aligns with the bent leg, then slowly lower it. Repeat. Now do the exercise with the opposite leg.



ADVANCED: ADD AFTER WEEK 3

Bird Dog

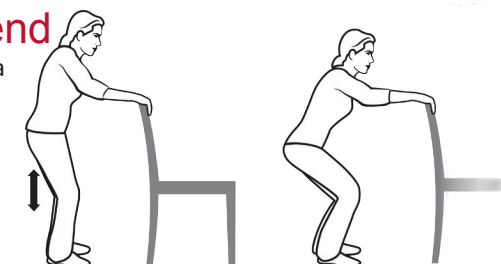
Start on all fours, with your spine neutral. Lift your right arm up, keeping your elbow straight. Then lift left leg up, with knee straight, extending back slightly.



Hold for three seconds, then return to neutral. Repeat with left arm and right leg. Then repeat the entire sequence from the beginning.

Knee Bend

Stand behind a chair and hold the back of it with your hands. Squat as if you were sitting down, keeping your hips above your knees. Stand up using your legs, not your hands.



Trunk Rotation

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Keeping your shoulders flat against the floor, and keeping your knees together, move both knees as far to the left as you can. Then move both knees to the right side as far as you can. Return to the neutral position and repeat.

