

# Lower Back Pain Exercises

### What can I do to help prevent low back pain?

You can reduce the strain on your back by doing the following:

- ▶ Don't push with your arms when you move a heavy object. Turn around and push backwards so the strain is taken by your legs.
- ▶ Whenever you sit, sit in a straight-backed chair and hold your spine against the back of the chair.
- ▶ Bend your knees and hips and keep your back straight when you lift a heavy object.
- ▶ Avoid lifting heavy objects higher than your waist.
- ▶ Hold packages you carry close to your body, with your arms bent.
- ▶ Use a footrest for one foot when you stand or sit in one spot for a long time. This keeps your back straight.
- ▶ Bend your knees when you bend over.
- ▶ Sit close to the pedals when you drive and use your seat belt and a hard backrest or pillow.

▶ Lie on your side with your knees bent when you sleep or rest. It may help to put a pillow between your knees.

▶ Put a pillow under your knees when you sleep on your back.

▶ Raise the foot of the bed 8 inches to discourage sleeping on your stomach unless you have other problems that require that you keep your head elevated.

To rest your back, hold each of these positions for 5 minutes or longer:

▶ Lie on your back, bend your knees, and put pillows under your knees.

▶ Lie on your back, put a pillow under your neck, bend your knees to a 90-degree angle, and put your lower legs and feet on a chair.

▶ Lie on your back, bend your knees, and bring one knee up to your chest and hold it there. Repeat with the other knee, then bring both knees to your chest. When holding your knee to your chest, grab your thigh rather than your lower leg to avoid over flexing your knee.

## Low Back Pain Exercises

**1. STANDING HAMSTRING STRETCH:** Place the heel of your leg on a stool about 15 inches high. Keep your knee straight. Lean forward, bending at the hips until you feel a mild stretch in the back of your thigh. Make sure you do not roll your shoulders and bend at the waist when doing this or you will stretch your lower back instead. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times. Repeat the same stretch on your other leg.



**2. CAT AND CAMEL:** Get down on your hands and knees. Let your stomach sag, allowing your back to curve downward. Hold this position for 5 seconds. Then arch your back and hold for 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10.



**3. QUADRIPED ARM/LEG RAISES:** Get down on your hands and knees. Tighten your abdominal muscles to stiffen your spine. While keeping your abdominals tight, raise one arm and the opposite leg away from you. Hold this position for 5 seconds. Lower your arm and leg slowly and alternate sides. Do this 10 times on each side.



**4. PELVIC TILT:** Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Tighten your abdominal muscles and push your lower back into the floor. Hold this position for 5 seconds, then relax. Do 3 sets of 10.



**5. PARTIAL CURL:** Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Tighten your stomach muscles and flatten your back against the floor. Tuck your chin to your chest. With your hands stretched out in front of you, curl your upper body forward until your shoulders clear the floor. Hold this position for 3 seconds. Don't hold your breath. It helps to breathe out as you lift your shoulders up. Relax. Repeat 10 times. Build to 3 sets of 10. To challenge yourself, clasp your hands behind your head and keep your elbows out to the side.



**6. LOWER TRUNK ROTATION:** Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Tighten your abdominal muscles and push your lower back into the floor. Keeping your shoulders down flat, gently rotate your legs to one side, then the other as far as you can. Repeat 10 to 20 times.



**7. SINGLE KNEE TO CHEST STRETCH:** Lie on your back with your legs straight out in front of you. Bring one knee up to your chest and grasp the back of your thigh. Pull your knee toward your chest, stretching your buttock muscle. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds and return to the starting position. Repeat 3 times on each side.



**8. DOUBLE KNEE TO CHEST:** Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Tighten your abdominal muscles and push your lower back into the floor. Pull both knees up to your chest. Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10 to 20 times.

