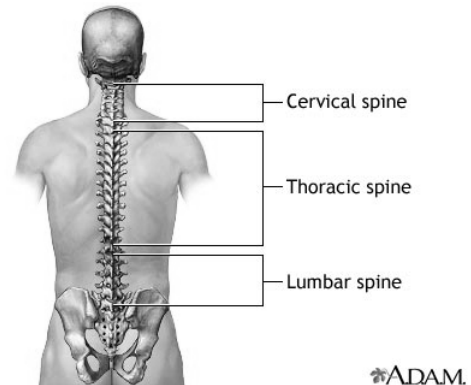


Back Pain Exercises

Low Back Pain Exercises Repeat _____ Times, _____ Times/ Day

- **Standing hamstring stretch:** Place the heel of your injured 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 of your leg. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.
- **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.
- **Quadruped arm/leg raise:** 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.
- **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.
- **Partial curl:** Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Tighten your stomach muscles. 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.
- **Gluteal stretch:** Lying on your back with both knees bent, rest the ankle of one leg over the knee of your other leg. Grasp the thigh of the bottom leg and pull that knee toward your chest. You will feel a stretch along the buttocks and possibly along the outside of your hip on the top leg. Hold this for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.
- **Extension exercise:** a.) Lie face down on the floor for 5 minutes. If this hurts too much, lie face down with a pillow under your stomach. This should relieve your leg or back pain. When you can lie on your stomach for 5 minutes without a pillow, then you can continue with the rest of this exercise.
b.) After lying on your stomach for 5 minutes, prop yourself up on your elbows for another 5 minutes. Lie flat again for 1 minute, then press down on your hands and extend your elbows while keeping your hips flat on the floor. Hold for 1 second and lower yourself to the floor. Repeat 10 times. Do 4 sets. Rest for 2 minutes between sets. You should have no pain in your legs when you do this, but it is normal to feel pain in your lower back. Do this several times a day.
- **Side Plank:** Lie on your side with your legs, hips, and shoulders in a straight line. Prop yourself up onto your forearm so your elbow is directly under your shoulder. Lift your hips off the floor and balance on your forearm and the outside of your foot. Try to hold this position for 15 seconds, then slowly lower your hip to the ground. Switch sides and repeat. Work up to holding for 1 minute or longer. This exercise can be made easier by starting with your knees and hips flexed to 45 degree angles.



Written by Tammy White, MS, PT, and Phyllis Clapis, PT, DHSc, OCS, for RelayHealth

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This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.

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Low Back Pain Exercises



Standing hamstring stretch



Cat and camel



Pelvic tilt



Quadruped arm/leg raise



Partial curl



Extension exercise



Gluteal stretch



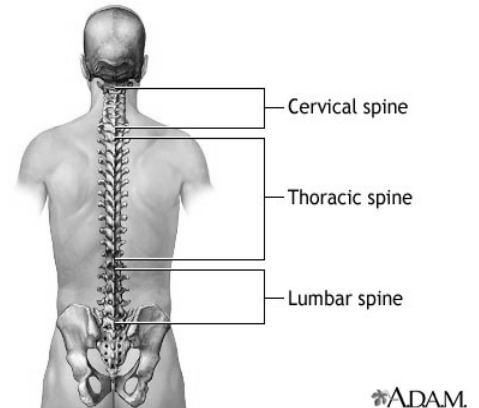
Side plank

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Upper Back Pain Rehabilitation Exercises:

Repeat _____ Times, _____ Times/ Day

- **Pectoralis stretch:** Stand in a doorway or corner with both arms on the wall slightly above your head. Slowly lean forward until you feel a stretch in the front of your shoulders. Hold 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.
- **Thoracic extension:** While sitting in a chair, clasp both arms behind your head. Gently arch backward and look up toward the ceiling. Repeat 10 times. Do this several times per day.
- **Arm slide on wall:** Sit or stand with your back against a wall and your elbows and wrists against the wall. Slowly slide your arms upward as high as you can while keeping your elbows and wrists against the wall. Do 3 sets of 10.
- **Scapular squeeze:** While sitting or standing with your arms by your sides, squeeze your shoulder blades together and hold for 5 seconds. Do 3 sets of 10.
- **Mid-trap exercise:** Lie on your stomach on a firm surface and place a folded pillow underneath your chest. Place your arms out straight to your sides with your elbows straight and thumbs toward the ceiling. Slowly raise your arms toward the ceiling as you squeeze your shoulder blades together. Lower slowly. Do 3 sets of 15. Progress to holding soup cans or small weights in your hands.
- **Thoracic stretch:** Sit on the floor with your legs out straight in front of you. Hold your mid-thighs with your hands. Curl your head and neck toward your belly button. Hold for a count of 15. Repeat 3 times.
- **Quadruped arm/leg raise:** 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.
- **Rowing exercise:** Tie a piece of elastic tubing around an immovable object and grasp the ends in each hand. Keep your forearms vertical and your elbows at shoulder level and bent to 90 degrees. Pull backward on the band and squeeze your shoulder blades together. Repeat 10 times. Do 3 sets.



Written by Phyllis Clapis, PT, DHSc, OCS, and Pierre Rouzier, MD.

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Upper Back Pain Rehabilitation Exercises



Pectoralis stretch



Thoracic extension



Arm slide on wall



Scapular squeeze



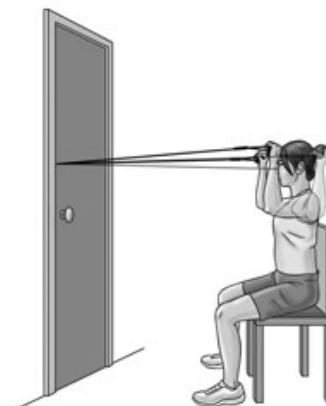
Mid-trap exercise



Thoracic stretch



Quadruped arm/leg raise



Rowing exercise

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