

BEST MEDICAL CARE, PC

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Put the Brakes on Back Pain

About 80 percent of all North Americans will experience back problems some time in their lives. About 30 percent of them will develop back problems that will keep them from working. But many of these problems can be prevented simply by taking the proper precautions. Here are some tips to keep you on the job and pain-free.

- Do exercises that will strengthen your back, leg, and abdominal muscles, such as walking, running, progressive resistance exercises, and supervised weightlifting.

- Whenever possible, sit in straight-backed chairs with firm back support rather than chairs that are overstuffed or on rollers or in ones that swivel.

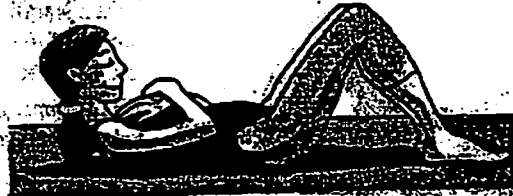


- Wear low-heeled shoes and boots.

- When lifting, squat close to the object, keep it close to your body, and lift it slowly, letting

your legs do the work, not your back.

- Stretch back and leg muscles before and after exercising.
- Sleep on a firm, flat mattress.
- Switch sitting positions frequently.
- When you are standing still, place feet shoulder-width apart and periodically shift your weight from one foot to the other.
- Move objects slowly and smoothly.
- Do exercises to strengthen all of your abdominal muscles.
- When working at a computer, use a document holder to angle your work and place your computer screen so you can look straight ahead rather than down.
- Keep your weight under control, because extra pounds put a strain on your body, including your back.
- If you experience pain while trying to lift something, STOP!
- Sleep on your side with your legs bent, a small pillow or pad between your knees, and your hands near your side.
- Look for opportunities to sit with your knees lower than your hips.
- Ask a friend or friends for help when moving heavy objects, allowing for an equal distribution of the load up and down stairs.
- On long driving trips, pull over regularly for short refreshing walks and stretches.
- Learn ways to cope with emotional stresses that might cause your back muscles to tighten.
- When leaning forward, bend from your hips not your waist,



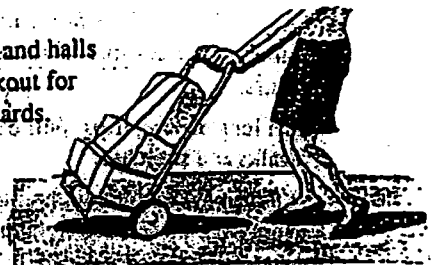
keeping your neck and back as straight as possible.

- When sitting in your car, try moving the seat forward so that your knees are about level with your hips.
- Avoid crossing your legs.
- Sit or stand so that you could drop an imaginary line straight from your ears, through your shoulders, and your hips.
- Turn your feet to face things you need instead of reaching off to the side or pulling things toward you.
- To pick up objects that have fallen on the floor while you're sitting, slide to the edge of your chair, place a hand on your knee or your desk to support your back, and keep one foot in front of you for additional support.



Take a few minutes to walk around the office or do some gentle stretches to relieve muscle tension.

- When standing for a long time at home, use a footstool to rest one foot or open a cabinet door and rest a foot on the bottom shelf.
- Use shopping bags with handles instead of balancing bags on your hips.
- Use a step stool or ladder instead of reaching above your head with heavy objects.
- When vacuuming, step forward or backward as you push the machine or vacuum wand. Don't keep your feet planted in one place.
- Place your television at, or slightly above, eye level.
- When driving long distances, use a small pillow or rolled-up towel to support your lower back, use your armrests, and adjust your headrest to relax your neck muscles when you are stopped.
- Keep your wallet out of your back pocket when sitting.
- Keep walkways, stairs, and halls clear and be on the lookout for tripping or slipping hazards.
- Push a shopping cart or any rolling load in front of you instead of pulling it behind you.



Exercise Program

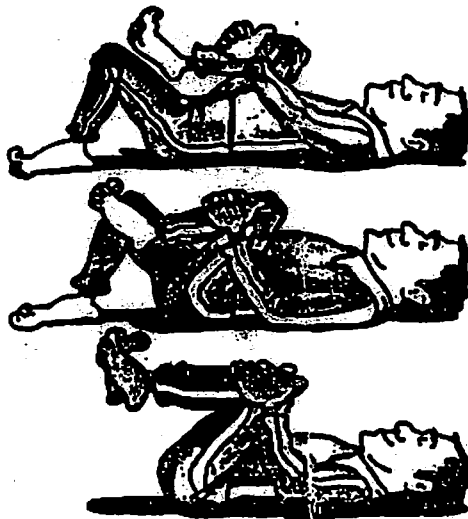
Here are a few simple but important suggestions for a successful back exercise program:

- If you are recovering from a back problem, follow only the exercises your doctor or physical therapist has recommended to avoid possible further injury.
- These exercises, done regularly, will help keep a healthy back strong and fit.
- Exercise every day. Occasional exercising may actually be harmful to your back. Reserve 30 minutes each day, preferably 15 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes at night.
- Don't exercise if you are having pain. Don't overdo it at first. Consult your physician or physical therapist if you experience pain while exercising.
- Begin your exercises in the starting position with a warm-up period lasting 2-3 minutes: limber up by moving your arms and legs and alternately tightening and relaxing your muscles.



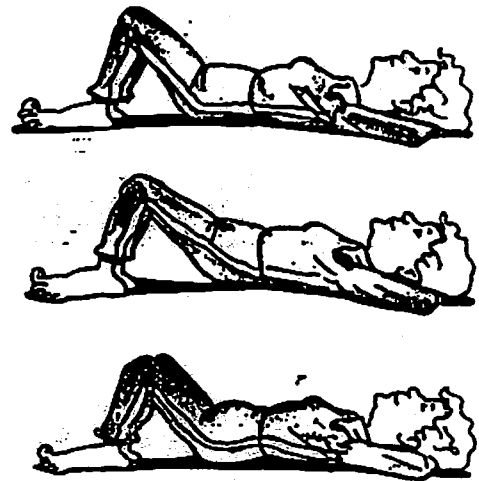
Remember, any therapeutic exercise program will probably be graduated. Check with your doctor or physical therapist for instructions on any necessary program changes.

Rx
Knee-to-Chest Raise

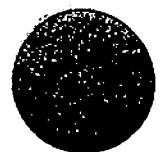


To help limber up a stiff back:
1. Assume starting position. 2. Raise right knee to chest. 3. Hold, count to five. 4. Repeat 5 times. 5. Repeat steps 1-4 with left leg. 6. Repeat steps 1-4 with both legs. Note: Don't lift legs with arms or hands.

Rx
Pelvic Tilt

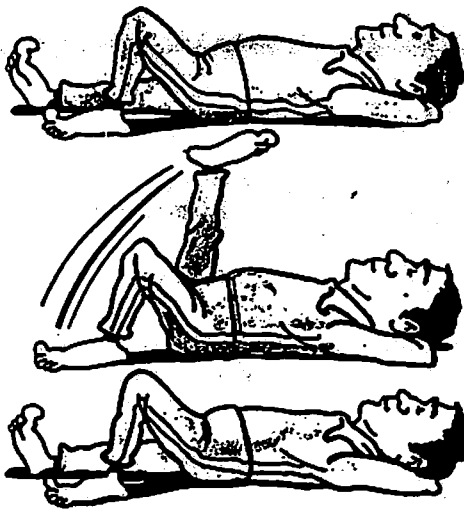


To strengthen front and back muscles, reducing swayback:
1. Assume starting position. 2. Firmly tighten buttock muscles. 3. Hold, count to five. 4. Relax buttocks. 5. Repeat 5 times. Note: Keep lower spine flat against floor.



Rx

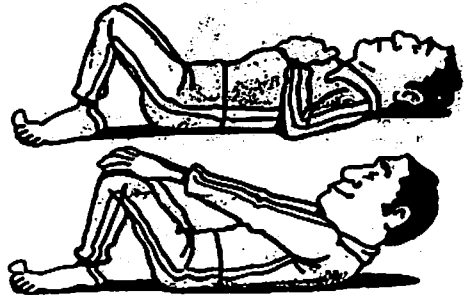
Single Leg Raise



To help limber up, stretch hamstring:
 1. Assume starting position. 2. Slowly raise right leg as high as you comfortably can. 3. Hold, count to five. 4. Return leg to floor. 5. Repeat 5 times. 6. Repeat steps 1-5 with left leg. Note: Don't swing legs up fast or use hands to help.

Rx

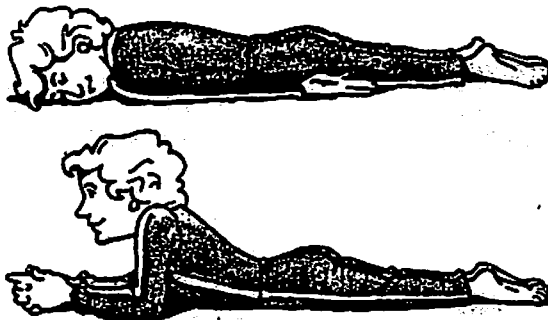
Half Sit-ups



To strengthen abdominal and back muscles:
 1. Assume starting position. 2. Slowly raise head and neck to top of chest. 3. Reach both hands forward, place on knees. 4. Hold, count to five. 5. Slowly return to starting position. 6. Repeat 5 times. Note: Keep mid and low back flat on floor.

Rx

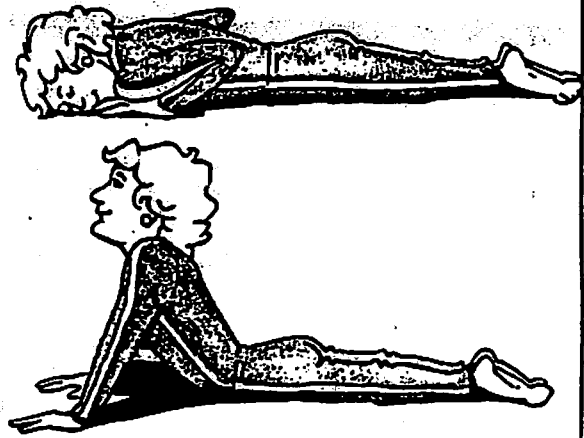
Elbow Props



To help maintain the normal lumbar curve and to strengthen low back muscles:
 1. Lie on your stomach as pictured. 2: Turn your head to one side and relax your arms at your sides. 3. Relax in this position for three to five minutes. 4. Then prop on elbows, maintaining this position for a period of two to three minutes. 5. Return to starting position and relax for one minute. 6. Repeat 5 times. Note: Keep your lower back completely relaxed.

Rx

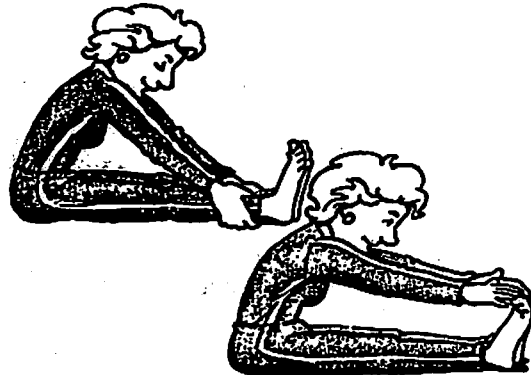
Press Ups



ADVANCED EXERCISE (Be sure to check with doctor!) To help maintain the normal lumbar curve and to strengthen low back muscles:
 1. Lie on your stomach as pictured. 2. Do a partial push-up, keeping pelvis on the floor. Hold, count to five. 3. Ease yourself back to the starting position. 4. Repeat 5 times. Note: Relax lower back and legs.

Rx

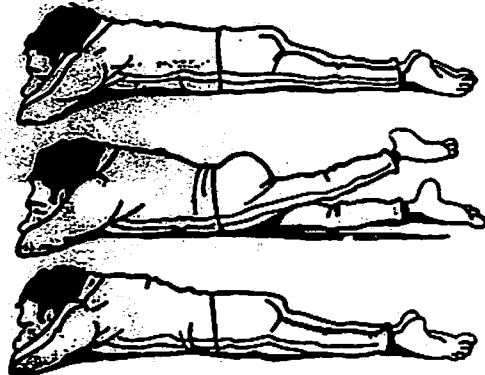
Hamstring Stretch



To limber up tight hamstring muscles:
 1. Assume sitting position with your legs straight and feet upright, heels no more than six inches apart. 2. Bend from the hips to get an easy stretch. 3. Hold for 20 seconds. 4. Repeat 5 times.

Rx

Hip Hyperextension



ADVANCED EXERCISE (Be sure to check with doctor!) To stretch, strengthen hip, buttock and back muscles:
 1. Lie on stomach as pictured 2. Stiffen straight left leg. 3. Slowly raise leg from hip. 4. Return leg to floor. 5. Repeat 5 times. 6. Repeat steps 1-5 with right leg. Note: Don't lift pelvis to raise leg. Keep leg straight.