

You may feel like resting, but moving is good for your back. Exercises for lower back pain can strengthen back, stomach, and leg muscles. They help support your spine, relieving back pain. Always ask your health care professional before doing any exercise for back pain. Depending on the cause and intensity of your pain, some exercises may not be recommended and can be harmful.



Partial Crunches

Partial crunches can help strengthen your back and stomach muscles. Lie with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Cross arms over your chest or put hands behind your neck. Tighten stomach muscles and raise your shoulders off the floor. Breathe out as you raise your shoulders. Don't lead with your elbows or use arms to pull your neck off the floor. Hold for a second, then slowly lower back down. Repeat 8 to 12 times. Proper form prevents excessive stress on your low back. Your feet, tailbone, and lower back should remain in contact with the mat at all times.



Hamstring Stretches

Lie on your back and bend one knee. Loop a towel under the ball of your foot. Straighten your knee and slowly pull back on the towel. You should feel a gentle stretch down the back of your leg. Hold for at least 15 to 30 seconds. Do 2 to 4 times for each leg.



Wall Squats

Stand 10 to 12 inches from the wall, then lean back until your back is flat against the wall. Slowly slide down until your knees are slightly bent, pressing your lower back into the wall. Hold for a count of 10, then carefully slide back up the wall. Repeat 8 to 12 times.



Press-up Extensions

Lie on your stomach with your hands under your shoulders. Push with your hands so your shoulders begin to lift off the floor. If it's comfortable for you, put your elbows on the floor directly under your shoulders and hold this position for several seconds.



Bird Dog

Start on your hands and knees, and tighten your stomach muscles. Lift and extend one leg behind you. Keep hips level. Hold for 5 seconds, and then switch to the other leg. Repeat 8 to 12 times for each leg, and try to lengthen the time you hold each lift. Try lifting and extending your opposite arm for each repetition. This exercise is a great way to learn how to stabilize the low back during movement of the arms and legs. While doing this exercise don't let the lower back muscles sag. Only raise the limbs to heights where the low back position can be maintained.

Exercises for Back Pain

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Knee-to-Chest

Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Bring one knee to your chest, keeping the other foot flat on the floor. Keep your lower back pressed to the floor, and hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Then lower your knee and repeat with the other leg. Do this 2 to 4 times for each leg.



Pelvic Tilts

Lie on your back with knees bent, feet flat on floor. Tighten your stomach by contracting it as though you were preparing for a punch. You'll feel your back pressing into the floor, and your hips and pelvis rocking back. Hold for 10 seconds while breathing in and out smoothly. Repeat 8 to 12 times.



Bridging

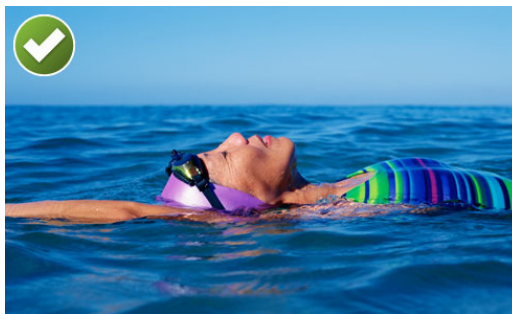
Lie on your back with knees bent and just your heels on the floor. Push your heels into the floor, squeeze your buttocks, and lift your hips off the floor until shoulders, hips, and knees are in a straight line. Hold about 6 seconds, and then slowly lower hips to the floor and rest for 10 seconds. Repeat 8 to 12 times. Avoid arching your lower back as your hips move upward. Avoid overarching by tightening your abdominal muscles prior and throughout the lift.

Lifting Weights May Help



Done properly, lifting weights doesn't usually hurt your back. In fact, it may help relieve chronic back pain. But when you have acute (sudden) back pain, putting extra stress on back muscles and ligaments could raise risk of further injury. Ask your doctor whether you should lift weights, and which exercises to avoid.

Aerobic Exercises



Aerobic exercise strengthens your lungs, heart, and blood vessels and can help you lose weight. Walking, swimming, and biking may all help reduce back pain. Start with short sessions and build up over time. If your back is hurting, try swimming, where the water supports your body. Avoid any strokes that twist your body.

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