

**Patient Information:**

## Low Back Pain

- Common Causes
- Treating Back Pain
- Quick Treatment: Back Pain
- See Your Healthcare Provider If
- Rehabilitation Exercises

### COMMON CAUSES:

Low back pain may be triggered by a specific event, such as improper lifting, bending, or twisting motion, or from poor conditioning (muscle strength/toning) and overuse. Bad posture, excessive weight and smoking can also be significant contributing factors.

Sport activities are known to increase risk for potential injury, but often back pain occurs after a seemingly innocent task, like bending over to pick up something from the floor. Sufferers frequently complain that back pain developed for no apparent reason.

Long term back problems are more likely when pain develops gradually or discomfort is recurrent over a period of time. Chronic back pain is often triggered by prior injuries, especially if original injury was not allowed to heal completely.

The events preceding pain or discomfort will provide clues behind original cause even if the exact incident is not evident.

### TREATING LOW BACK PAIN:

Most cases of low back pain are not serious and respond to simple treatments.

- ☑ When pain develops suddenly or related to direct trauma, stop all strenuous activities to prevent aggravation of injury, increasing the damage, and healing delays.
- ☑ Most back pain is related to muscle strain(s) rather than injury to the spine. Your back may feel tight or sore to touch. Muscle spasms may develop as strained muscles swell after injury. Rest and gentle stretching will help the muscles relax.
- ☑ Under most circumstances applying ICE will reduce swelling and pain and can even accelerate your healing.
- ☑ Depending upon severity of injury an X-ray or other imaging study may be needed.

### QUICK TREATMENT : BACK PAIN

- ◆ If you suspect injury, stop activity immediately. Apply ICE. Wrap sealed ice bag in towel and apply to injury as soon as possible. Keep on injury for 20 minutes and repeat every 2-3 hours for the first 48 to 72 hours. This will help reduce swelling and pain.
- ◆ Tylenol<sup>®</sup>, Aleve<sup>®</sup>, or Ibuprofen may be taken. Follow package directions and take with food.
- ◆ After the first 72 hours heat can be applied. Stretching back muscles, slowly after heating the muscle can help reduce stiffness.
- ◆ Research suggests most people can and should return to normal daily activities as tolerable. AVOID anything that significantly increases back pain.

In most cases back pain progressively improves over a course of 1-2 weeks without further intervention. During recovery, exercise with caution to prevent re-injury. Appropriate, slow, gradual rehabilitation will reduce healing time and help prevent re-injury.


### SEE YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER IF:


- 🚑 Back pain was caused by serious injury, such as car accident
- 🚑 Pain prevents walking
- 🚑 Back pain longer than one month
- 🚑 Weakness or pain in legs
- 🚑 Numbness that fails to resolve
- 🚑 Development of fever


# Low Back Pain Rehabilitation Exercises

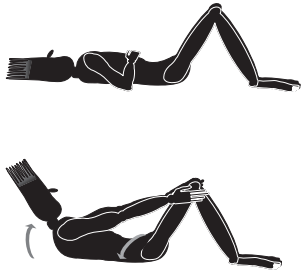
## REHABILITATION EXERCISES

- ◆ **RECOVERY TAKES TIME.**
- ◆ Rehabilitation may take weeks or even months depending on severity of injury. The severity of the injury will dictate recovery time. Slow, gradual rehabilitation will reduce healing time and prevent re-injury.
- ◆ Once initial pain has eased a rehabilitation program of low back strengthening exercises and stretching is recommended to help prevent re-injury and pain.
- ◆ Rehabilitation exercises are critical for the recovery process. Focus on the lower back muscles as well as the supporting trunk muscles: stomach, hip flexors, hamstrings (back of the thigh).
- ◆ Do these exercises on a regular basis and you will see improvements in your posture, work endurance, and athletic performance. The exercises shouldn't irritate your back or neck when done properly. If there is pain, STOP.
- ◆ **HELPFUL HINT:** Take deep even breaths while completing stretches and concentrate on the exercises with slow steady movements. If you experience any discomfort other than muscle soreness, slow down the pace or decrease the number of repetitions. If pain persists, discontinue exercise and contact your healthcare provider.

Inner Thigh Stretch		
Perform if checked	# of REPS	# of SETS
	10-15	1-3
		
<p><b>EXERCISE:</b> Position yourself on the floor with back flat to floor. Allow hands to rest on chest and legs to flop into a "frog" like position. Now, take deep breaths and relax your whole body as you exhale. Continue for about half a minute.</p>		

Hip Stretch		
Perform if checked	# of REPS	# of SETS
	10-15	1-3
		
<p><b>EXERCISE:</b> Position your back flat on the floor and let your arms rest at your side with legs straight. Next, slowly bring one knee over opposite leg. You should feel a stretch in your lower back Repeat with opposite leg.</p>		

Thigh Stretch		
Perform if checked	# of REPS	# of SETS
	10-15	1-3
		
<p><b>EXERCISE:</b> Position your back flat on the floor and let your arms rest at your side with legs straight. Next, pull one knee toward chest and hold. Stretch will be felt in back of thigh. Repeat with other leg.</p>		

Abdominal Strength		
Perform if checked	# of REPS	# of SETS
	10-15	1-3
		
<p><b>EXERCISE:</b> Lie with back flat to floor and knees bent. Lift head and neck toward chest while reaching for your knees with both hands. Movement should be slow and steady. Return to starting position.</p>		

# Low Back Pain Rehabilitation Exercises

Abdominal Strength		
Perform if checked	# of REPS	# of SETS
	10-15	1-3
<p><b>EXERCISE:</b> Lie with back flat to floor and knees bent. Only let finger tips touch back of head as you lift head and neck toward chest. (Do not pull neck with hands) Bend toward your knee and hold. Use a slow and steady movement.</p>		

Hamstring Stretch		
Perform if checked	# of REPS	# of SETS
	10-15	1-3
<p><b>EXERCISE:</b> Position your back flat on the floor and let your arms rest at your side with knees bent. Straighten one leg and lift upward until you feel stretch behind leg. Return to start position and complete with other leg.</p>		

Pelvic Lift		
Perform if checked	# of REPS	# of SETS
	10-15	1-3
<p><b>EXERCISE:</b> Position back flat on the floor and let arms rest at your side with knees bent. Tighten stomach and buttock muscles as you slowly lift hips upward. Hold for 5 seconds.</p>		

Pelvic Tilt		
Perform if checked	# of REPS	# of SETS
	10-15	1-3
<p><b>EXERCISE:</b> Position back flat on the floor and let hands rest under your head with knees bent. Tighten stomach and buttock muscles as you slowly tilt pelvis toward belly button. (Feel lower back pressed more tightly to the floor) Hold for 5 seconds.</p>		


Elbow Prop		
Perform if checked	# of REPS	# of SETS
	10-15	1-3
<p><b>EXERCISE:</b> Lay on stomach with head on floor and elbows bent with hands at rest beside ears. Press hands and elbows tightly to floor while lifting chest and head off the floor.</p>		


Upper Body Lift		
Perform if checked	# of REPS	# of SETS
	10-15	1-3
<p><b>EXERCISE:</b> Lay on stomach with arms down at sides. Lift head, neck and relaxed shoulders as one unit off the floor while keeping arms relaxed at side. Only lift as high as comfortably possible. Hold and then slowly relax. STOP if this causes pain.</p>		

Prone Leg Raise		
Perform if checked	# of REPS	# of SETS
	10-15	1-3
<p><b>EXERCISE:</b> Lay on stomach with head turned to floor or rest on folded arms. Keep both legs straight and then lift one upward 4-5 inches. Be careful not to arch your back during exercise. Repeat with opposite leg.</p>		

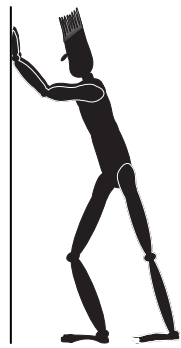
**KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK! YOU ARE ALMOST DONE!**

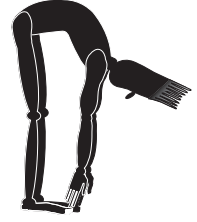
# Low Back Pain Rehabilitation Exercises

Opposite Stretch		
Perform if checked	# of REPS	# of SETS
	10-15	1-3
		
<p><b>EXERCISE:</b> Lie on stomach, lift right arm and left leg upward at the same time until you feel stretch. Repeat with opposite arm and leg.</p>		

Lower Back Stretch (Curl Up)		
Perform if checked	# of REPS	# of SETS
	10-15	1-3
		
<p><b>EXERCISE:</b> Pull knees and head together, to form a ball shape. Hold for 30 seconds and then stretch your toes and fingers in opposite directions.</p>		

**PROGRESS TO THESE ADDITIONAL STRETCHES AS ABLE. IF THERE IS PAIN, STOP.**

Calf Stretch		
Perform if checked	# of REPS	# of SETS
	10-15	1-3
		
<p><b>EXERCISE:</b> Lean onto wall with both hands. Lunge one leg forward while keeping the back leg straight. You should feel the stretch in calf muscle of straight leg. Repeat with opposite leg.</p>		

Back Stretch		
Perform if checked	# of REPS	# of SETS
	10-15	1-3
		
<p><b>EXERCISE:</b> Stand up straight. Bend over slowly to touch your toes. Keep knees slightly bent. Count to 30 and return to standing position.</p>		

**CONSULT YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER IF YOUR CONDITION FAILS TO IMPROVE.**