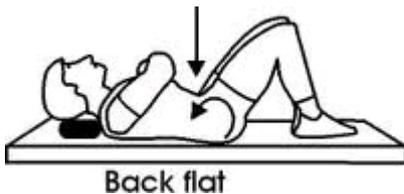


Low Intensity Lower Back Health Routine*

*This back health routine is more suitable for people who are elderly, immobile, infirm, overweight, or who suffer with fibromyalgia. It is extremely important for individuals suffering with such things to make the effort to do low intensity exercises daily to strengthen muscles supporting the spine, prevent muscle stiffness and keep the spine mobile & healthy. Doing this can help recovery from lower back pain and ward off likely future bouts of it.

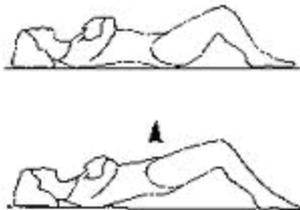
- With all exercises aim to gradually build the number of times (reps) you do the exercise. For instance, if you can only do 6 the first week, do 8 the second and build to 20 gradually.
- Discontinue any exercises on advice of your doctor or physiotherapist. Always consult a doctor concerning any pain or medical conditions with which you are suffering.

1. Lying on firm surface, knees bent, feet flat on floor. Tighten your buttocks and roll your pelvis up at the front to flatten your lower back against the ground. Hold for 3 seconds, and then relax. Repeat this exercise 8-20 times.



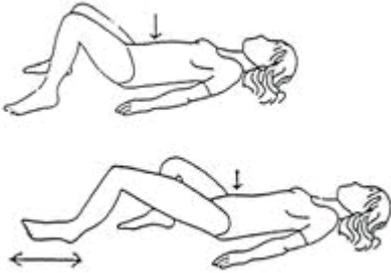
If you cannot lie down try standing with your back against a wall and your feet 30-40cm away from the wall (knees slightly bent). Tighten your buttocks and roll your pelvis up at the front to flatten your lower back against the wall. Hold for 3 seconds, and then relax. Repeat this exercise 8-20 times.

2. Stay lying on your back with your knees up. After resting for a couple of minutes tighten your buttocks and pull in your stomach. Push your pelvis up off the floor until your abdomen & thighs are in a straight line, and then slowly lower. Repeat the exercise 8-20 times.



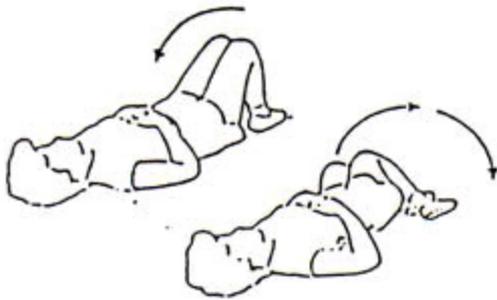
If you cannot lie down sit in a firm (dining/office) chair with your feet shoulder width apart on the floor. Fold your arms across your forehead. Slowly bend forward as far as possible, and then slowly straighten up again. Repeat 10-25 times.

3. Stay laying on your back with your knees up, put your fingertips on your hip bones. After resting for a couple of minutes pull in your stomach (engage your core muscles). Begin slowly straightening alternate legs, keeping your heels on the ground while trying to keep your pelvis as still as possible (feel through hip bones) and your stomach tensed. Repeat 8-20 times.

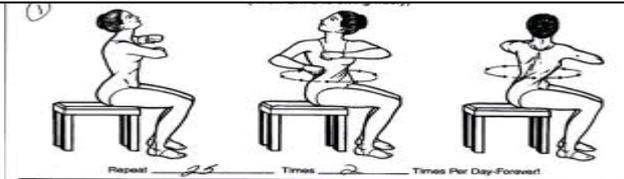


If you are not able to lie down you can adapt this exercise for sitting. Sit in a firm chair with your feet on the ground and your finger tips on your hip bones (pelvis). Pull in your stomach and begin lifting alternate legs off the chair a couple of inches (5 cm). Keep your abdomen tensed and your pelvis still. Also keep your torso upright (don't lean sideways to make exercise easier). Repeat 8-20 times

4. Stay lying on you back, knees together and feet flat on floor, rest a little. Keeping your knees together, roll them out to the left (as shown). Try to relax the spine letting go of the muscles around the spine for 5 seconds. Once relaxed engage your stomach muscles and move the knees over to the other side, relax back. Repeat this 8-20 times.



If you cannot lie down, try sitting in a firm, armless chair. Fold your arms across your chest then slowly, keeping your body upright, twist left as far as possible to look over your shoulder. Repeat to the right. Repeat exercise 10-25 times.



- As well as doing your back health routine you should also do some gentle 'stamina/cardiovascular exercise' at least 3 days a week to keep you healthy and help avoid back pain. Suitable exercise includes walking, cycling, swimming, dancing, housework & climbing stairs. Aim to do 20 mins, 3-5days per week.
- Look for opportunities to exercise (park further away from the shops, use stairs not escalators, get off the bus a stop early) and do activities you enjoy (involving friends will also increase motivation & enjoyment).

Stretches*

*It is very important to stretch after exercise. Stretching also helps ease lower back stiffness and pain. Hold stretches for 15-30 seconds, breathing out and relaxing as you stretch.

Below are some recommended stretches:

Self stretch



Place towel under left foot. Side bend to left, progressively taking up any slack in towel.

Self stretch



As for piriformis, although piriformis will receive the most direct stretch from this.

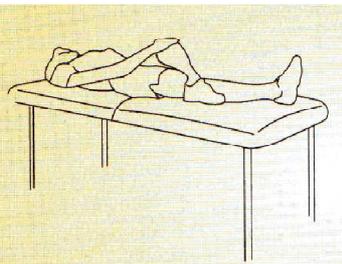


Move towel up back with each set of stretching.

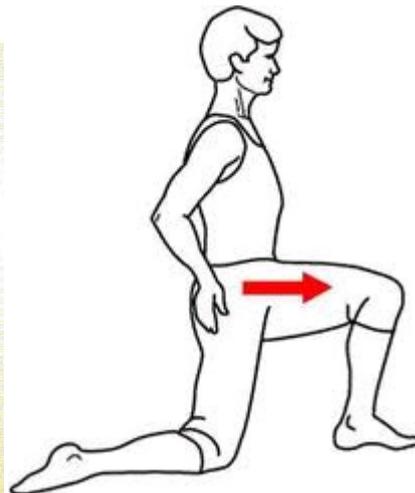
Self stretch



In lying, pull knee to opposite shoulder. Avoid after pregnancy due to stress on pelvis.



Hand on knee and pull across body.



Try to twist using trunk rather than shoulders or arms.

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