

Exercises to Relieve Low Back Pain

Below are general exercise recommendations to help with low back pain. There may be some exercises that will not be beneficial for your particular health issue. None of the exercises should make your symptoms worse. If an exercise is painful, it may not be appropriate for your condition. If you have questions regarding the exercises or if your symptoms are not improving, consult your physician or physical therapist.

Single knee to chest:

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor or bed. Pull one knee to your chest. You should feel this stretch in the back of your hip and/or in your back.

Hold for 30 seconds, repeat 2 times with each leg.



Lower trunk rotation:

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor or bed. Slowly move your knees side-to-side, gradually increasing how far your knees go down towards the floor or bed each time.

Repeat 15 times.



Gluteal stretch:

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor or bed. Place one ankle on the opposite thigh. Pull your knee towards the opposite shoulder. You should feel this stretch in the back of your hip.

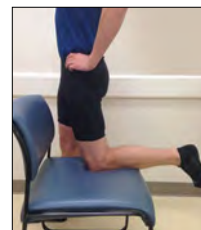
Hold for 30 seconds, repeat 2 times with each leg.



Hip flexor stretch:

Stand with one knee bent on a chair or stool. The standing leg should be slightly in front of you. Tighten your buttocks to move your hips forward. Avoid arching your back. You should feel the stretch in the front of your hip or thigh.

Hold for 30 seconds, repeat 2 times with each leg.



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Lying pelvic tilt:

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor or bed. Place your hands on the top of your pelvis or hips. Rock your hips backward so that your back flattens against the floor or bed. You will feel your stomach muscles tighten. Then, rock your hips forward to arch your back off of the surface. Slowly rock your hips between tilting your hips backwards and forwards without flexing to the point of feeling pain.

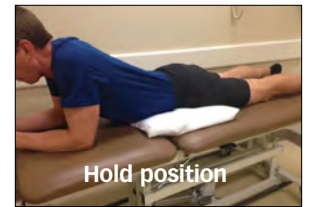
Repeat 20 times.



Prone press-up:

Lie on your stomach with a pillow underneath your mid-section. Rise up on your elbows so your spine is slightly arched. Relax your back muscles.

Hold for 10 seconds, repeat 10 times.



Child's pose stretch:

Position yourself on all fours, with your hands and knees on the floor. Bring your buttocks towards your heels as you reach forward with your hands. You should feel the stretch in your mid to lower back.

Hold for 30 seconds, repeat 2 times.



Clamshells:

Lie on your side with your knees bent. While keeping your feet together, lift your top knee. Avoid rotating your back as you lift your knee.

Repeat 15 times, 2 sets.



Posture recommendations when sitting:

- Avoid slouching when sitting. Try sitting with your back supported with a roll or pillow.
- Avoid sitting with your feet up. This can place excessive strain on your low back structures and sciatic nerve.
- Avoid crossing your legs.

If you have questions about these exercises, talk with your primary care provider or physical therapist. Or, contact Rehabilitation Medicine at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Heater Road: (603) 650-3600.