

Back Basics

Prevent and treat back pain



Risk Factors

- ✓ **BEING OVERWEIGHT:** Puts more stress on the spine and changes its curvature
- ✓ **STRESS:** Causes tight muscles, slows healing, increase pain, and sleeplessness
- ✓ **DEPRESSION OR ANXIETY:** Increase the perception of pain
- ✓ **AGE:** Muscle elasticity and tone decrease, the intervertebral discs lose fluid and flexibility
- ✓ **PHYSICAL FITNESS:** Strength, aerobic, and stretching support the spine and all movement
- ✓ **OCCUPATIONAL:** Heavy lifting, bending, twisting, vibration, or prolonged sitting
- ✓ **SMOKING:** Reduces blood flow to the tissues, increases the risk of osteoporosis, impedes healing, and coughing may cause back pain

Prevent Back Pain

AVOID

- 👎 Bending
- 👎 Twisting
- 👎 Leg lifts (core exercise)
- 👎 Sit-ups
- 👎 Sedentary lifestyle
- 👎 During an acute injury avoid weight lifting, activities that cause pain, prolonged bed rest
- 👎 Poor posture

TRY

- 👍 Hinging at the hips, squatting, or lunging
- 👍 Turn your whole body
- 👍 Lift one leg at a time with the other knee bent
- 👍 Half crunches build core strength and don't strain the back
- 👍 Getting 150 minutes of moderate activity each week: aerobic activity, strengthening, stretching
- 👍 Low impact activity, such as walking or swimming increases circulation and improves pain
- 👍 Use proper body mechanics at all times; strengthen and protect the spine with core exercises

Basics



Exercise: Movement promotes circulation to revive muscles. Aim for a minimum of 150 minutes a week of moderate activity. Balancing cardio, strength, and stretching helps the body work more efficiently.



RICE: Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation help overused muscles or injuries. If an injury is severe, see a doctor.



Heat: Avoid on acute injuries, but can be useful otherwise. You can also alternate hot and cold.



Fuel: Staying hydrated and getting adequate nutrients provides your body with the things it needs to function and stay strong.



Sleep: Establish a sleep routine that promotes rest. Poor sleep increases pain, chronic disease, and stress.



Massage: Avoid on injured or swollen areas.

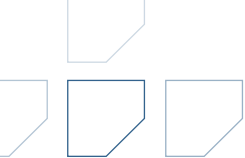
- For circulation, gently rub muscles in the direction towards your heart.
- For knots, press firmly and hold while taking a few deep breaths.
- For tight muscles, quickly rub side to side across the muscle, creating friction.



Stress: Identify sources and symptoms of stress. Use healthy coping strategies for immediate stress, and strategize solutions for ongoing stressors.



Mindset: Stay present to identify pain patterns, triggers, and attitudes around the pain. A feeling of hopelessness can accompany intense or chronic pain, so it is helpful to think about what you can do, not what you can't.



Risk Factors

Where and when do you experience pain?

What are you currently doing to care for your pain?

What behaviors would be helpful for your back pain?





Exercises for relief

Complete the following exercises on their own or as a sequence. Modify to accommodate mobility and comfort. Check with your doctor before starting an exercise program. Discontinue and check with your doctor if you experience pain, numbness, tingling, or dizziness.



Check-in

Take note of pain, thoughts that occupy your mind, or stressors. Next, bring your focus to the area you are going to work on, taking a slow deep breath in and releasing all the air on the exhale. Repeat check-in during exercise or anytime to redirect pain.



Core activation

Activate the muscles you would use to stop the flow of urine and draw the belly button towards the spine to activate deep core muscles that stabilize and support the spine.



Spine: On the hands and knees, round the spine back (exhale) and reverse by arching (inhale). Move between the two positions.



Spinal Balance: Extend left leg out and behind, reaching through the heel and activating the back leg muscles. Extend the opposite arm forward. Repeat on other side. Try tucking knee to elbow several times. Switch sides



Lunges: Bring one foot all the way forward, make sure the knee is above the heel and not forward. Feel a stretch in that hamstring and the other leg's quad muscle. Switch sides.

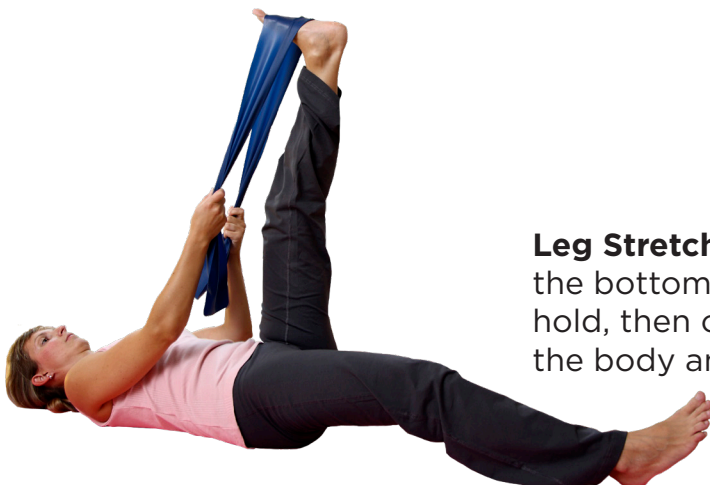


Back Extension: From the stomach, lift the upper body up by activating your back muscles. Hold this position while taking a few breaths. Release and rest for a moment. Repeat if desired. The spine should be lengthened, not compressed.



Side leg lifts: On your side, lift and lower the top leg several times, switch sides.

Piriformis stretch: Lying on your back, bend the knees with feet flat on the mat. Bring one foot to rest over the other knee. For a deeper stretch, bring the legs to your chest and hold. Repeat on the other side.



Leg Stretch: Using the strap for support around the bottom of the foot, bring one leg up and hold, then out to the side and hold, then across the body and hold



