

Home Exercise Program Login Instructions

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Gain a deeper understanding of your condition and the road to health recovery.

Track your progress

Keep track of your activity and progress throughout treatment and post care.

Clinician Notes

This exercise program is for chronic low back pain. There are three phases in this program. Each phase should take 2-4 weeks to complete. Phase 1 is appropriate for acute/flare. Phase two is appropriate for subacute or progression from phase 1, and phase three is appropriate for end stage/general conditioning for low back pain. We recommend working through each phase in order.

No exercise should cause severe pain which is sharp or shooting. If this occurs review exercise instructions and you may need to reduce the movement to a smaller rather than larger movement.

Aching after exercise can be experienced and this should reduce as you progress through the home program.

Your physician may recommend specific exercises within this routine depending on your condition/disagnosis.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Hooklying Lumbar Traction

REPS: 8 | SETS: 1 | DAILY: 3 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin lying on your back with your knees bent and feet resting flat on the floor. Place your hands on the tops of your thighs, close to your hips.

Movement

Slowly press down on your thighs, extending your elbows, until you feel a gentle relief in your low back.

Tip

Make sure to slowly increase pressure and stop if you feel an increase in pain.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Supine Bridge with Spinal Articulation

REPS: 8 | SETS: 1 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin lying on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor.

Movement

Slowly lift your hips off the ground into a bridge position, concentrating on lifting one vertebra off the ground at a time. Then reverse the movement to lower yourself back down, one vertebra at a time.

Tip

Make sure to keep your movements slow and controlled. Keep your abdominals tight as you move into the bridge.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Seated Flexion Stretch

REPS: 8 | SETS: 1 | HOLD: 10-30S | DAILY: 2 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin sitting in a chair with your feet on the ground, shoulder width apart.

Movement

Bend forward as far as you can, letting your arms hang toward the floor.

Tip

Make sure to keep your back relaxed during the stretch.



Quadrupedal Pelvic Tilt

REPS: 8 | SETS: 1 | DAILY: 2 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

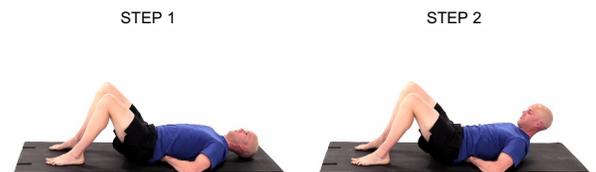
Begin on all fours.

Movement

Slowly tilt your pelvis forward and backward by contracting and relaxing your abdominal muscles.

Tip

Make sure to concentrate your movements on your pelvis, and do not let your back arch excessively during the exercise.



Neutral Lumbar Spine Curl Up

REPS: 10 | SETS: 1 | HOLD: 10-30S | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phases 1, 2 and 3

Setup

Begin lying on your back with your knees bent, feet resting on the floor, and your hands under your lower back.

Movement

Slowly curl your upper body towards your knees, then return to the starting position and repeat.

Tip

Make sure your low back stays flat on the floor and maintain a gentle chin tuck during the exercise.



Prone Press Up on Elbows

REPS: 3 | SETS: 1 | HOLD: 60S | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phases 1 and 2

Setup

Begin lying on your stomach, resting on your elbows low to the ground.

Movement

Push up on your elbows, bending your back upward.

Tip

Make sure to keep your hips in contact with the floor and maintain a gentle chin tuck throughout the exercise.



Wall Quarter Squat with PLB

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 5

Phase 1

Setup

Begin standing upright in front of a wall. Breathe in through your nose.

Movement

Lean back into a squat against the wall with your knees bent to 45 degrees, and hold this position, while breathing out through pursed lips, as if you are blowing out a candle. Breathe slowly in and out as you hold the squat. As you stand up, breathe out through pursed lips, as if you are blowing out a candle. Repeat.

Tip

Make sure the exhalation is about twice as long as the inhalation. Make sure your knees are not bent forward past your toes and keep your back flat against the wall during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Hooklying Lumbar Rotation

REPS: 10 | SETS: 1 | DAILY: 2 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin lying on your back with your knees bent and feet resting on the floor.

Movement

Keeping your back flat, slowly rotate your knees slightly toward one side, then back to the other side.

Tip

Make sure that your back and shoulders stay flat on the floor.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Tall Kneeling Hip Hinge

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 1

Setup

Begin in a tall kneeling position.

Movement

Keeping your back straight, bend forward at your hips as if you were performing a squat. Then return to the starting position and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to keep your back straight during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Ice

HOLD: 20 MINS | DAILY: 3 | WEEKLY: 7

Phases 1, 2 and 3

Icing, also called cryotherapy, is the use of cold to help ease pain and/or reduce the onset of swelling or bruising, and muscle spasms.

To apply ice, use a gel ice pack or an unopened bag of frozen vegetables, such as peas. Wrap the ice pack in a pillowcase if it does not already have a layer of cloth or fabric over it. This protects your skin and keeps the ice pack clean.

In general, using an ice pack for 10 to 20 minutes is enough to cool the tissues and decrease pain. Avoid using ice longer than 20 minutes, as this may cause damage to the skin or nerves.

Be sure to occasionally check the skin beneath the ice pack for irritation, and remove the ice if irritation occurs.

Make sure to follow any specific instructions from your healthcare provider on how to position your body when using ice, how to keep the ice on, and how many times a day you should use ice. If you have any questions about using ice, please contact your healthcare provider.



Heat

SETS: 1 | HOLD: 30 MIN | DAILY: 2 | WEEKLY: 7

Phases 1, 2 and 3

Heat, sometimes called thermotherapy, can be used to help relax muscles and ease stiffness.

Never apply heat to a fresh injury, as this can cause more harm and delay healing.

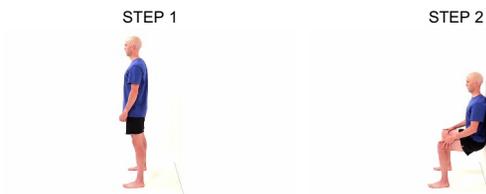
You can apply heat using a heating pad, heat wrap, hot water bottle, or through a warm bath or shower. No matter which method you choose, the temperature should be “warm” rather than “hot.” Temperatures that are too high can burn your skin and do not help decrease discomfort.

When using a heating pad or hot water bottle, be sure to wrap it in a towel to protect your skin.

Be sure to occasionally check the skin beneath the heat source for irritation, and remove the heat if irritation occurs.

The length of time you should use heat depends on your injury or condition. You may experience relief after 15 or 20 minutes, or you may need to keep the heat on for longer to feel relief.

Be sure to follow any specific instructions from your healthcare provider on how to position your body when using heat, how to keep the heat on, and how many times a day you should use heat. If you have any questions about using heat, please contact your healthcare provider.



Wall Squat

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 2

Setup

Begin in a standing upright position in front of a wall with your feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart.

Movement

Lean back into a squat against the wall with your knees bent to 90 degrees, and hold this position.

Tip

Make sure your knees are not bent forward past your toes and keep your back flat against the wall during the exercise.



Sidelying Lumbar Rotation Stretch

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 2

Setup

Begin lying on your side with your top leg bent at a 90 degree angle, holding it in place with your bottom arm, and your other leg straight. Your top arm should be straight in front of you on the floor.

Movement

Reach your top arm straight overhead and directly backward. Try to place your shoulders flat on the floor while keeping your hips facing forward.

Tip

Make sure only to reach as far back as you can without bringing your hips backward.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Prone Hip Extension

REPS: 8 | SETS: 2 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 2

Setup

Begin by lying on your stomach with both legs stretched straight behind you.

Movement

Slowly lift one leg upward as far as you can without arching your low back, then lower it back to the starting position.

Tip

Make sure to keep your knee straight and trunk steady during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Squat at Table

REPS: 10 | SETS: 1 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 2

Setup

Begin in a standing upright position in front of a counter or table surface for support.

Movement

Slowly bend at your knees to lower into a squat position. Hold briefly, then press into your legs to return to a standing upright position and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to keep your toes pointing forward and your heels on the ground. Do not let your knees bend forward past your toes or collapse inward.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Standing Side Plank on Wall

REPS: 3 | HOLD: 30-60S | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 2

Setup

Begin in a standing upright position with a wall at your side.

Movement

Place one forearm against the wall and take a small step away into a side plank. Hold this position.

Tip

Make sure to keep your head in line with your trunk, do not let your hips drop toward the floor during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



Plank on Table with Scapular Protraction Retraction

REPS: 3 | SETS: 1 | HOLD: 30-60S | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 2

Setup

Begin in a standing upright position in front of a table or counter.

Movement

Place both hands on the edge of the table and step your feet back into a plank position. Slowly round your upper back, pulling your shoulder blades apart. Hold briefly, then lower back down, squeezing your shoulder blades together, and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to keep your back flat and maintain a gentle chin tuck. Do not shrug your shoulders during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Supine Transversus Abdominis Bracing with Leg Extension

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 2

Setup

Begin lying on your back with your knees bent, feet resting on the floor, and your fingers resting on your stomach just above your hip bones.

Movement

Tighten your abdominals, pulling your navel in toward your spine and up. You should feel your muscles contract under your fingers. Hold this position, then straighten one knee, holding your leg a few inches off the ground. Bring it back to the starting position and repeat with your other leg.

Tip

Make sure to keep your abdominals tight as you extend your legs. Do not hold your breath during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



Standing Trunk Flexion at Wall

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 2

Setup

Begin in a standing upright position with your back against a wall.

Movement

Slowly nod your head and continue to roll down your spine to fold over at your waist. Hold briefly, then reverse the motion, making sure your head is the last to come up, and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to keep your movements slow and controlled and avoid shrugging your shoulders during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Standing Hip Hinge with Dowel

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 2

Setup

Begin in a standing upright position, holding a dowel rod against your back. It should be in contact with your head, mid-back, and tailbone.

Movement

Lean forward, bending at your hips and keeping your back straight. Return to the starting position and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to use your buttock muscles to control the movement and keep a soft bend in your knees. The dowel should stay in contact with all three points on your back during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Superman on Table

REPS: 5 | SETS: 1 | HOLD: 5-10S | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phases 2 and 3

Setup

Lie face down on a bed or comfortable surface with your head slightly hanging over the edge, and arms at your sides.

Movement

With your chin tucked, lift your head away from the floor until your back is straight. At the same time, draw your shoulder blades down and towards the middle of your back and raise your arms a few inches off the surface of the bed.

Tip

Make sure to keep your chin tucked and do not turn or rotate your head.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Primal Push Up

REPS: 3 | SETS: 1 | HOLD: 5-30S | DAILY: 2 | WEEKLY: 7

Phases 2 and 3

Setup

Begin on all fours, with your arms directly under your shoulders and feet resting on the ground.

Movement

Slowly raise up to your toes, lifting both knees off the floor and keeping your back straight.

Tip

Make sure to maintain a gentle chin tuck during the exercise and do not let your trunk twist.

STEP 1



Self Traction in Standing with Counter Top

REPS: 5 | SETS: 1 | HOLD: 10S | DAILY: 3 | WEEKLY: 7

Phases 2 and 3

Setup

Begin standing with a table or counter top in front of you.

Movement

Keeping your arms straight, slowly bend your knees, shifting more of your weight onto your arms, until you feel a gentle pressure relief in your back. Make sure to use a sturdy chair or supportive surface to hold onto and maintain your balance during the exercise. Lean forward in to the table so that you are supporting part of your weight through your arms.

Tip

Hold this position as long as is comfortable.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Plank on Knees

REPS: 3 | SETS: 1 | HOLD: 10-60S | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 3

Setup

Begin lying on your front, propped up on your elbows.

Movement

Engage your abdominal muscles and lift your hips up into a plank position, keeping your elbows directly under your shoulders. Hold this position.

Tip

Make sure to keep your back straight and maintain a gentle chin tuck during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Side Plank on Knees

REPS: 3 | SETS: 1 | HOLD: 10-60S | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 3

Setup

Begin lying on your side with your knees bent, propped up on your forearm. Your elbow should be directly under your shoulder.

Movement

Engage your abdominal muscles and raise your hips up into a side plank position, keeping your knees on the ground. Hold this position, then return to the starting position and repeat.

Tip

Make sure to keep your core engaged during the exercise. Do not hold your breath or let your hips roll forward, backward, or drop towards the floor.

STEP 1



STEP 2



DNS Bug Heel Touches

REPS: 12 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 3

Setup

Begin lying on your back with a wall above your head, knees bent, and feet resting on the floor. Place your hands against the wall and apply gentle pressure.

Movement

Activate your abdominals and raise one leg off the ground, keeping your knee bent, followed by the other. Hold briefly, then alternate tapping your heels to the ground.

Tip

Make sure to keep your abdominals tight and keep your low back flat against the floor during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Deadlift with Resistance

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 3

Setup

Begin in a standing upright position with holding both ends of a resistance band that is anchored under your feet.

Movement

Bend at your hips and knees, lowering your arms toward the ground, then stand back up, engaging your back and thigh muscles and pulling up on the resistance band with your arms straight.

Tip

Make sure to keep your abdominals tight and back straight during the exercise.

STEP 1



STEP 2



Bridge with Hip Abduction and Resistance - Ground Touches

REPS: 10 | SETS: 3 | DAILY: 1 | WEEKLY: 7

Phase 3

Setup

Begin lying on your back with your feet resting on the ground, arms by your sides, and a resistance band looped around your legs above your knees.

Movement

Tighten your abdominals and lift your hips off the ground so your body is in a straight line. Hold this position and move your knees apart, pulling against the band. Bring your knees back together, lower your hips, then repeat.

Tip

Keep your movements slow and controlled. Make sure not to let your hips rotate to either side or drop down during the exercise.

Understanding Your Condition

Low Back Pain

LOW BACK PAIN is a common condition that can make everyday activities painful and difficult. During your recovery, it is important to stay active and try to do as much of your normal routine as possible. This will help your back heal.

Low Back Pain By the Numbers



80% of adults experience low back pain at some point in their lifetime¹



Over time, 90% of people with acute low back pain fully recover²



Low back pain accounts for up to 40% of all missed workdays¹



More than 90% of back pain is not caused by a serious condition²

How Does the Spine Work?

Your spine, made up of bones called vertebrae, is like a **mast on a ship**. The muscles that attach to the spine are the ropes that support the mast and prevent it from curving and becoming unstable.

If the supporting muscles are weak or imbalanced, the spine experiences a lot of stress. By strengthening these muscles, you can take pressure off of your spine and reduce your back pain.



IMBALANCED MUSCLES



SUPPORTING MUSCLES

What Does Low Back Pain Feel Like?

Low back pain can be felt directly in the low back or spreading down to your buttocks, hips, or legs. Other symptoms vary greatly from person to person. Pain may come on slowly or suddenly, and feel sharp or dull. You may also feel stiffness or muscle spasms. Some people find that changing positions, reclining, or lying down helps relieve their symptoms.

What Causes Low Back Pain?

While there are many causes of low back pain, most people have “non-specific low back pain.” This means that there is not a specific disease or abnormality causing the pain. Common causes of low back pain include trauma, lack of physical activity, poor health, and poor or repetitive postures and movements. However, sometimes there is not a direct cause of low back pain.³

You may have a higher chance of developing low back pain if you smoke, are overweight or obese, do physically strenuous work, have a job where you sit down most of the time, have a stressful or dissatisfying job, or if you experience anxiety or depression.

What Can I Do?



EXERCISE

It is important to stay active and continue as much of your regular activity as possible during your recovery. Low-impact exercises like walking, stretching, yoga, and swimming are common activities that will help you recover from low back pain.



ICING

Place a cold pack on your back for 10-15 minutes every 2 to 3 hours to help ease the pain. Be sure to place a thin cloth layer between the cold pack and your skin.



POSTURE

Practice good posture in the office, during rest, and in your day-to-day activities. Having healthy posture will lessen the strain on your muscles, tendons, and ligaments.

When to Contact Your Healthcare Provider

Seek medical attention if you experience any of the following:

- Your back pain is a result of a fall or an accident
- You are 70 years or older with a new onset of back pain
- Pain that does not go away, even at night or when lying down
- Weakness in one or both legs
- Problems with bladder, bowel, or sexual function
- Unexplained fever or rapid weight loss when not trying to lose weight
- If you have a history of cancer, a weakened immune system, or osteoporosis
- Your back pain does not improve within 4 weeks

References:

1. Deyo RA, Mirza SK, Martin BI. Back pain prevalence and visit rates: estimates from US national surveys, 2002. *Spine*. 2006;31:2724-7.
2. Ngyuen TH and Randolph DC. Nonspecific Low Back Pain and Return to Work. *Am Fam Physician*. 2007; 15:76(10):1497-1502.
3. Patel, AT and Abna, OA. Diagnosis and Management of Acute Low Back Pain. *Am Fam Physician*. 2000;15;61(6):1779-1786.

Low Back Pain



Your spine is like a mast on a ship.



Low impact exercise relieves low back pain.

Low back pain is an extremely common condition &ndash about 80% of adults experience it at some point in their lifetime. Fortunately, most back pain will go away in four to six weeks on its own with good self-care.

Your spine is like a mast on a ship. The muscles that attach to the spine are the ropes that support the mast and prevent it from curving and becoming unstable. If the supporting muscles are weak or imbalanced, the spine experiences a lot of stress. By strengthening these muscles, you can take pressure off of your spine and reduce your back pain.

The most effective way to relieve and prevent your back pain is to stay active! By stretching, swimming, walking, and participating in other low-impact exercises, you are helping to keep the muscles that support your spine flexible and strong.

The majority of back pain is not caused by a serious underlying condition, and imaging tests such as MRIs and x-rays are rarely necessary. While serious cases are rare, you should contact your healthcare provider immediately if you experience persistent and unusual symptoms like unexpected weight loss, fever, back pain lasting longer than 4 weeks, or sudden changes in bowel and bladder function. Your healthcare provider will help you decide your best course of treatment.

Remember, low back pain can be resolved with daily physical activity and a positive outlook. The sooner you start moving, the sooner you'll feel better!