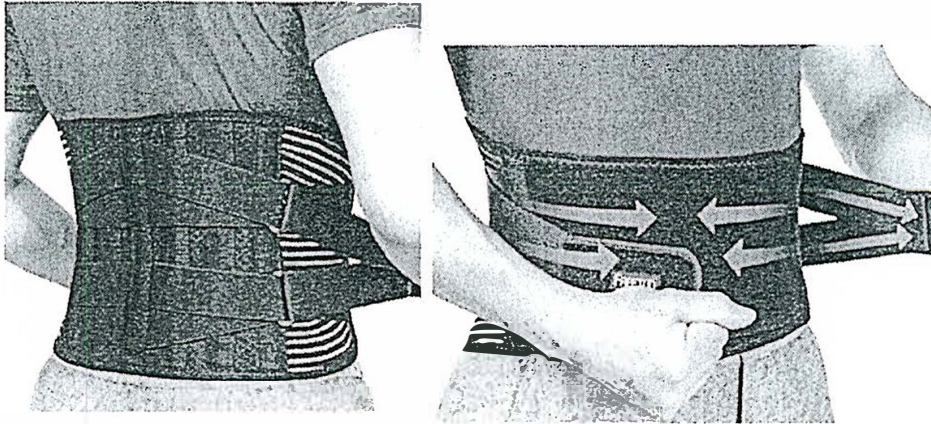


Low Back Pain

- You can purchase a Lumbar Support Belt at any pharmacy, drugstore, or on Amazon (~\$30).
- You can also start the exercises listed below.
- Consider topical creams or medications as listed on supplemental handout.



Low Back Pain: Exercises

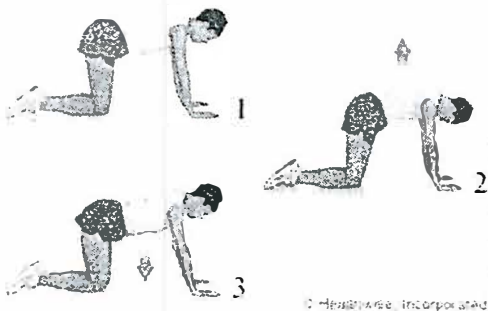
Your Care Instructions

Here are some examples of typical rehabilitation exercises for your condition. Start each exercise slowly. Ease off the exercise if you start to have pain.

Your doctor or physical therapist will tell you when you can start these exercises and which ones will work best for you.

How to do the exercises

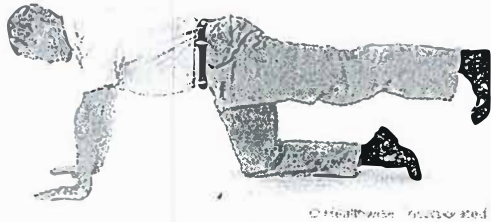
Back stretches



1. Get down on your hands and knees on the floor.
2. Relax your head and allow it to droop. Round your back up toward the ceiling until you feel a nice stretch in your upper, middle, and lower back. Hold this stretch for as long as it feels comfortable, or about 15 to 30 seconds.
3. Return to the starting position with a flat back while you are on your hands and knees.
4. Let your back sway by pressing your stomach toward the floor. Lift your buttocks toward the ceiling.

5. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds.
6. Repeat 2 to 4 times.

Alternate arm and leg (bird dog) exercise



Note: Do this exercise slowly. Try to keep your body straight at all times, and do not let one hip drop lower than the other.

1. Start on the floor, on your hands and knees.
2. Tighten your belly muscles.
3. Raise one leg off the floor, and hold it straight out behind you. Be careful not to let your hip drop down, because that will twist your trunk.
4. Hold for about 6 seconds, then lower your leg and switch to the other leg.
5. Repeat 8 to 12 times on each leg.
6. Over time, work up to holding for 10 to 30 seconds each time.
7. If you feel stable and secure with your leg raised, try raising the opposite arm straight out in front of you at the same time.

Knee-to-chest exercise



1. Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor.
2. Bring one knee to your chest, keeping the other foot flat on the floor (or keeping the other leg straight, whichever feels better on your lower back).
3. Keep your lower back pressed to the floor. Hold for at least 15 to 30 seconds.
4. Relax, and lower the knee to the starting position.
5. Repeat with the other leg. Repeat 2 to 4 times with each leg.
6. To get more stretch, put your other leg flat on the floor while pulling your knee to your chest.

Curl-ups



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1. Lie on the floor on your back with your knees bent at a 90-degree angle. Your feet should be flat on the floor, about 12 inches from your buttocks.
2. Cross your arms over your chest. If this bothers your neck, try putting your hands behind your neck (not your head), with your elbows spread apart.
3. Slowly tighten your belly muscles and raise your shoulder blades off the floor.
4. Keep your head in line with your body, and do not press your chin to your chest.
5. Hold this position for 1 or 2 seconds, then slowly lower yourself back down to the floor.
6. Repeat 8 to 12 times.

Pelvic tilt exercise



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1. Lie on your back with your knees bent.
2. "Brace" your stomach. This means to tighten your muscles by pulling in and imagining your belly button moving toward your spine. You should feel like your back is pressing to the floor and your hips and pelvis are rocking back.
3. Hold for about 6 seconds while you breathe smoothly.
4. Repeat 8 to 12 times.

Heel dig bridging



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1. Lie on your back with both knees bent and your ankles bent so that only your heels are digging into the floor. Your knees should be bent about 90 degrees.
2. Then push your heels into the floor, squeeze your buttocks, and lift your hips off the floor until your shoulders, hips, and knees are all in a straight line.
3. Hold for about 6 seconds as you continue to breathe normally, and then slowly lower your hips back down to the floor and rest for up to 10 seconds.
4. Do 8 to 12 repetitions.

Hamstring stretch in doorway



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1. Lie on your back in a doorway, with one leg through the open door.
2. Slide your leg up the wall to straighten your knee. You should feel a gentle stretch down the back of your leg.
3. Hold the stretch for at least 15 to 30 seconds. Do not arch your back, point your toes, or bend either knee. Keep one heel touching the floor and the other heel touching the wall.
4. Repeat with your other leg.
5. Do 2 to 4 times for each leg.

Hip flexor stretch



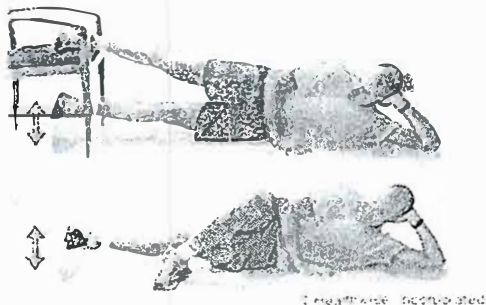
1. Kneel on the floor with one knee bent and one leg behind you. Place your forward knee over your foot. Keep your other knee touching the floor.
2. Slowly push your hips forward until you feel a stretch in the upper thigh of your rear leg.
3. Hold the stretch for at least 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat with your other leg.
4. Do 2 to 4 times on each side.

Straight-leg raises to the outside



1. Lie on your side, with your affected hip on top.
2. Tighten the front thigh muscles of your top leg to keep your knee straight.
3. Keep your hip and your leg straight in line with the rest of your body, and keep your knee pointing forward. Do not drop your hip back.
4. Lift your top leg straight up toward the ceiling, about 12 inches off the floor. Hold for about 6 seconds, then slowly lower your leg.
5. Repeat 8 to 12 times.
6. Switch legs and repeat steps 1 through 5, even if only one hip is sore.

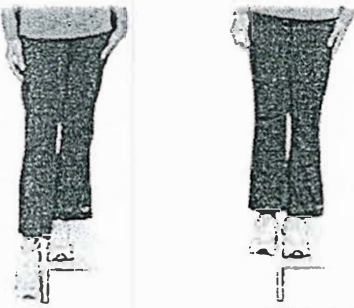
Straight-leg raises to the inside



1. Lie on your side with your affected hip on the floor.

2. You can either prop up your other leg on a chair, or you can bend that knee and put that foot in front of your other knee. Do not drop your hip back.
3. Tighten the muscles on the front thigh of your bottom leg to straighten that knee.
4. Keep your kneecap pointing forward and your leg straight, and lift your bottom leg up toward the ceiling about 6 inches. Hold for about 6 seconds, then lower slowly.
5. Repeat 8 to 12 times.
6. Switch legs and repeat steps 1 through 5, even if only one hip is sore.

Hip hike



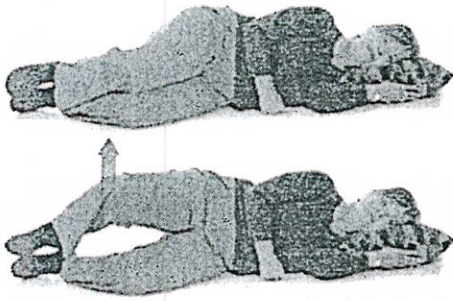
1. Stand sideways on the bottom step of a staircase, and hold on to the banister or wall.
2. Keeping both knees straight, lift your good leg off the step and let it hang down. Then hike your good hip up to the same level as your affected hip or a little higher.
3. Repeat 8 to 12 times.
4. Switch legs and repeat steps 1 through 3, even if only one hip is sore.

Hip rotator stretch



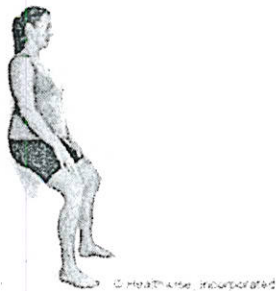
1. Lie on your back with both knees bent and your feet flat on the floor.
2. Put the ankle of your affected leg on your opposite thigh near your knee.
3. Use your hand to gently push your knee away from your body until you feel a gentle stretch around your hip.
4. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds.
5. Repeat 2 to 4 times.
6. Repeat steps 1 through 5, but this time use your hand to gently pull your knee toward your opposite shoulder.
7. Switch legs and repeat steps 1 through 6, even if only one hip is sore.

Clamshell



1. Lie on your side, with your affected hip on top. Keep your feet and knees together and your knees bent.
2. Raise your top knee, but keep your feet together. Do not let your hips roll back. Your legs should open up like a clamshell.
3. Hold for 6 seconds.
4. Slowly lower your knee back down. Rest for 10 seconds.
5. Repeat 8 to 12 times.
6. Switch legs and repeat steps 1 through 5, even if only one hip is sore.

Wall sit



1. Stand with your back 10 to 12 inches away from a wall.
2. Lean into the wall until your back is flat against it.
3. Slowly slide down until your knees are slightly bent, pressing your lower back into the wall.
4. Hold for about 6 seconds, then slide back up the wall.
5. Repeat 8 to 12 times.