



## Back Exercises

You can minimize problems with back pain with exercises that make the muscles in your back, stomach, hips and thighs strong and flexible. To decrease your risk of back pain or injury, keep in good physical condition with regular aerobic activity, such as walking, running, cycling or swimming. And, try these exercises to help strengthen the muscles that support your back.

Remember to warm up first. And, be sure to breathe—inhalé deeply before each repetition, and exhale when performing each repetition.

- Stand with your back against a wall and feet shoulder-width apart. Slide down into a crouch with knees bent to about 90 degrees. Count to five and slide back up the wall. Repeat 5 times.
- Lie on your stomach. Tighten the muscles in one leg and raise it from the floor. Hold your leg up for a count of 10 and return it to the floor. Do the same with the other leg. Repeat five times with each leg.
- Lie on your back with your arms at your sides. Lift one leg off the floor. Hold your leg up for a count of 10 and return it to the floor. Do the same with the other leg. Repeat five times with each leg. If that is too difficult, keep one knee bent and the foot flat on the ground while raising the leg.
- Sit upright in a chair with legs straight and extended at an angle to the floor. Lift one leg waist high. Slowly return your leg to the floor. Do the same with the other leg. Repeat five times with each leg.
- Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on floor. Slowly raise your head and shoulders off the floor and reach with both hands toward your knees. Count to 10. Repeat five times.
- Stand behind a chair with your hands on the back of the chair. Lift one leg back and up while keeping the knee straight. Return slowly. Raise other leg and return. Repeat five times with each leg.
- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on your bed or floor. Raise your knees toward your chest. Place both hands under your knees and gently pull your knees as close to your chest as possible. Do not raise your head. Do not straighten your legs as you lower them. Start with five repetitions, several times a day.
- Stand with your feet slightly apart. Place your hands in the small of your back. Keep your knees straight. Bend backwards at the waist as far as possible and hold the position for one or two seconds.

As with any exercise program, you should talk with your doctor first—especially if you are age 40 or older, have been inactive for a while or have a health condition.

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