

Low Back Pain

COMMON CAUSES:

Low back pain may be triggered by

- ◆ Improper lifting, bending, or twisting motions
- ◆ Poor conditioning (muscle strength/tone)
- ◆ Overuse
- ◆ Poor posture; sitting too long at computer
- ◆ Being overweight .
- ◆ Injuries, including sports, car accidents, falls
- ◆ Vertebral disc protrusion/herniation

Most back pain is related to muscle strain(s) rather than injury to the spine. Chronic back pain is often triggered by prior injuries, especially if original injury was not allowed to heal completely.

TREATING LOW BACK PAIN:

Most cases of low back pain are not serious and respond to simple treatments.

- ◆ If you suspect injury, stop activity immediately. Apply ICE. Wrap sealed ice bag in towel and apply to injury as soon as possible. Keep on injury for 10-15 minutes and repeat every 2-3 hours for the first 48 to 72 hours. This will help reduce swelling and pain.
- ◆ Tylenol®, Aleve®, or Ibuprofen may be taken. Follow package directions and take with food.
- ◆ After the first 72 hours, heat can be applied. Stretching back muscles, slowly after heating the muscle can help reduce stiffness.
- ◆ Muscle spasms may develop after injury. Rest and gentle stretching will help the muscles relax.
- ◆ Most people can and should return to normal daily activities as tolerated. AVOID anything that significantly increases back pain.

In most cases back pain progressively improves over a

course of 1-2 weeks without further intervention. During recovery, exercise with caution to prevent re-injury.

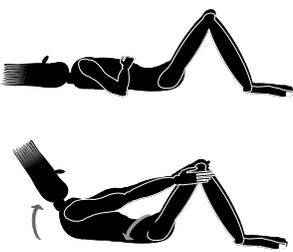
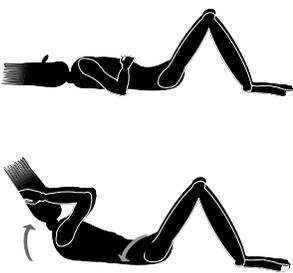
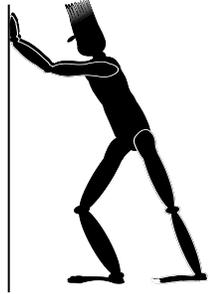
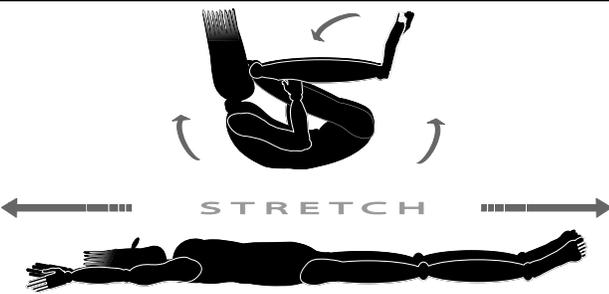
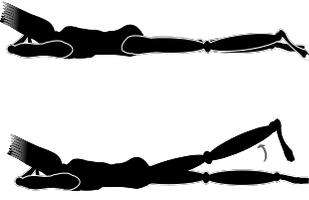
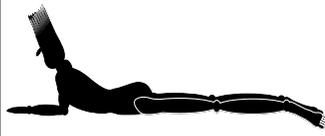
SEE YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER IF:

- ☒ Back pain was caused by serious injury, such as car accident
- ☒ Pain prevents walking
- ☒ Back pain longer than one month
- ☒ Weakness, pain, numbness in legs
- ☒ Fever, weight loss, history of osteoporosis or cancer

REHABILITATION EXERCISES

- ◆ **RECOVERY TAKES TIME.** Rehabilitation may take weeks or even months depending on severity of injury.
- ◆ Once initial pain has eased, a rehabilitation program of low back strengthening exercises and stretching is recommended to help prevent re-injury and pain.
- ◆ Rehabilitation exercises are critical for the recovery process. Focus on the lower back muscles as well as the supporting trunk muscles: stomach, hip flexors, hamstrings (back of the thigh).
- ◆ Do these exercises on a regular basis and you will see improvements in your posture, work endurance, and athletic performance. The exercises shouldn't irritate your back or neck when done properly. If there is pain, STOP.

Low Back Pain Rehabilitation Exercises

<p>Inner Thigh Stretch</p>  <p>EXERCISE: Position yourself on the floor with back flat to floor. Allow hands to rest on chest and legs to flop into a "frog" like position. Now, take deep breaths and relax your whole body as you exhale. Continue for about half a minute.</p>	<p>Hip Stretch</p>  <p>EXERCISE: Position your back flat on the floor and let your arms rest at your side with legs straight. Next, slowly bring one knee over opposite leg. You should feel a stretch in your lower back. Repeat with opposite leg.</p>	<p>Thigh Stretch</p>  <p>EXERCISE: Position your back flat on the floor and let your arms rest at your side with legs straight. Next, pull one knee toward chest and hold. Stretch will be felt in back of thigh. Repeat with other leg.</p>	<p>Abdominal Strength</p>  <p>EXERCISE: Lie with back flat to floor and knees bent. Lift head and neck toward chest while reaching for your knees with both hands. Movement should be slow and steady. Return to starting position.</p>
<p>Abdominal Strength</p>  <p>EXERCISE: Lie with back flat to floor and knees bent. Only let finger tips touch back of head as you lift head and neck toward chest. (Do not pull neck with hands) Bend toward your knee and hold. Use a slow and steady movement.</p>	<p>Hamstring Stretch</p>  <p>EXERCISE: Position your back flat on the floor and let your arms rest at your side with knees bent. Straighten one leg and lift upward until you feel stretch behind leg. Return to start position and complete with other leg.</p>	<p>Pelvic Tilt</p>  <p>EXERCISE: Position back flat on the floor and let hands rest under your head with knees bent. Tighten stomach and buttock muscles as you slowly tilt pelvis toward belly button. (Feel lower back pressed more tightly to the floor) Hold for 5 seconds.</p>	<p>Calf Stretch</p>  <p>EXERCISE: Lean onto wall with both hands. Lunge one leg forward while keeping the back leg straight. You should feel the stretch in calf muscle of straight leg. Repeat with opposite leg.</p>
<p>Lower Back Stretch (Curl Up)</p>  <p>EXERCISE: Pull knees and head together, to form a ball shape. Hold for 30 seconds and then stretch your toes and fingers in opposite directions.</p>	<p>Prone Leg Raise</p>  <p>EXERCISE: Lay on stomach with head turned to floor or rest on folded arms. Keep both legs straight and then lift one upward 4-5 inches. Be careful not to arch your back during exercise. Repeat with opposite leg.</p>	<p>Elbow Prop</p>  <p>EXERCISE: Lay on stomach with head on floor and elbows bent with hands at rest beside ears. Press hands and elbows tightly to floor while lifting chest and head off the floor.</p>	