

Exercises for Maintaining a Healthy Back

The spinal column is a complicated part of the anatomy which is made up of bones, called vertebrae that are stacked on top of each other with discs in between that act as shock absorbers, and muscles alongside the column which help to maintain the alignment. The individual components of this column must be properly aligned and in tune in order to allow movement without pain. However, bad posture, improper movement and lifting habits, and lack of proper exercise over the years can lead to an unhealthy spine which can lead to chronic back pain. The following exercises will allow you to maintain a healthy back, and decrease the chances of lost work, freedom, and money from back pain.

Exercises While Lying Flat

- ❖ Lie flat on your back and bend your knees. Press your lower back on the floor gently. Hold for several seconds and then relax. Repeat 5-10 times.
- ❖ Lie flat on your back and bend your knees. Lift your buttocks upward off of the ground while keeping your back straight. Hold for several seconds and then relax. Repeat 5-10 times.
- ❖ Lie flat on your back and bend your knees. Cross your arms across your chest. Lift your shoulders, neck, and head off of the ground while tightening your abdominal muscles. Keep your head in line with your shoulders. Hold for several seconds and then relax. Repeat 5-10 times.
- ❖ Lie face down on your abdomen with your arms by your side and forehead on the floor. Lift up your head, neck, and chest off of the floor while keeping your hips on the ground. Hold for 20-30 seconds and then relax. Repeat 3-5 times.
- ❖ Lie flat on your back and bend your knees. Pull one knee to your chest using your arms. Hold for 20-30 seconds and then relax. Repeat with the other leg. Repeat each set 5-10 times.

Exercises While on Your Hands and Knees

- ❖ Position yourself on your hands and knees on a soft surface. Align your hips over your knees and place your hands under your shoulders. Arch your back upward while allowing your head to drop slightly. Hold for 5 seconds and then relax. Repeat 3-5 times.
- ❖ Position yourself on your hands and knees on a soft surface. Align your hips over your knees and place your hands under your shoulders. Push your back toward the floor while raising your head. Hold for 5 seconds and then relax. Repeat 3-5 times.
- ❖ Position yourself on your hands and knees on a soft surface. Align your hips over your knees and place your hands under your shoulders. Lift one leg and extend it back until it is straight and lift your foot until it is elevated to the level of your hip. Keep your back and neck straight and in alignment with your hip. Hold for 5 seconds and then relax. Repeat with the other leg. Repeat each set 3-5 times.

Exercises While Sitting

- ❖ Sit all the way back in a chair with your feet flat on the floor and your back straight. Bend both arms to 90 degrees at the elbow and lift your elbows until they are at the level of your shoulders. Move your shoulders back while squeezing your shoulder blades together as far as you can. Hold for 5 seconds and then relax. Repeat 3-5 times.

- ❖ Sit all the way back in a chair with your feet flat on the floor and your back straight. Allow your arms to rest gently on your sides. While keeping your neck and head straight, raise both shoulders up as high as you can. Hold for 10 seconds and then relax. Repeat 3-5 times.
- ❖ Sit all the way back in a chair with your feet flat on the floor, about 10 inches apart, and your back straight. Bend forward and touch the floor with your hands. Hold for 5 seconds and then relax. Repeat 3-5 times.

Exercises While Standing

- ❖ Stand facing the wall with one foot about 10 inches away and the other about 20 inches away. Place palms of both hands on the wall and bend the knee closest to the wall. Keep the back leg straight and lean forward. Keep both feet flat on the floor during the entire exercise. Hold for 15 seconds and then switch legs. Repeat each set 5-10 times.
- ❖ Stand about one foot away and face the wall. Grab your ankle with one hand and bring up as far as you can while putting the other hand on the wall to maintain your balance. Keep your back and neck straight during the entire exercise. Hold for 15 seconds and then switch sides. Repeat each set 5-10 times.
- ❖ Stand against the wall with your back to the wall and your feet flat on the floor. Touch your ankles, buttocks, shoulders, and back of the head to the wall. Hold for 30 seconds and then relax. Repeat 3-5 times.
- ❖ Stand against the wall with your back to the wall and your feet flat on the floor. Touch your ankles, buttocks, shoulders, and back of the head to the wall. Slide down the wall into a sitting position while stepping forward slowly until your hips are at the level of your knees. Hold for 5-10 seconds and then slide back up gently. Repeat 3-5 times.

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