

Back Pain Exercises

Exercises to minimize problems with back pain

You can minimize problems with back pain with exercises that make the muscles in your back, stomach, hips and thighs strong and flexible. Some people keep in good physical condition by being active in recreational activities like running, walking, bike riding, and swimming. In addition to these conditioning activities, there are specific exercises that are directed toward strengthening and stretching your back, stomach, hip and thigh muscles.

Before beginning any exercise program, you should discuss the program with your doctor and follow the doctor's advice. It is important to exercise regularly, every other day. Before exercising you should warm up with slow, rhythmic exercises; if you haven't exercised in some time, you can warm up by walking. Inhale deeply before each repetition of an exercise and exhale when performing each repetition.

Exercises to strengthen your muscles

Wall slides to strengthen back, hip, and leg muscles



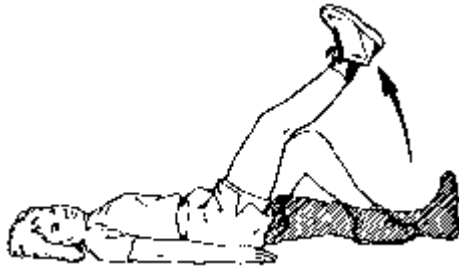
Stand with your back against a wall and feet shoulder-width apart. Slide down into a crouch with knees bent to about 90 degrees. Count to five and slide back up the wall. Repeat 5 times.

Leg raises to strengthen back and hip muscles.

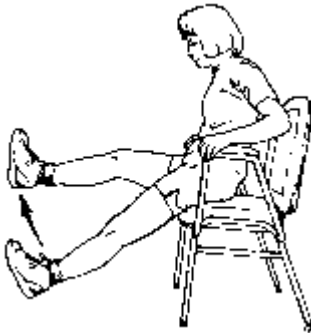


Lie on your stomach. Tighten the muscles in one leg and raise it from the floor. Hold your leg up for a count of 10 and return it to the floor. Do the same with the other leg. Repeat five times with each leg.

Leg raises to strengthen stomach and hip muscles



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.



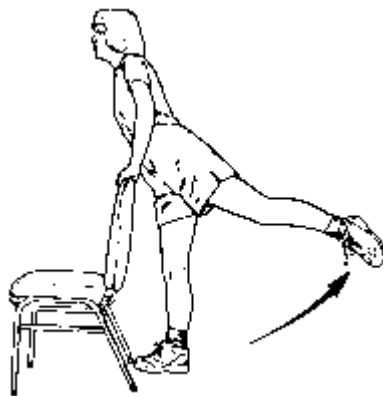
You can also sit upright in a chair with legs straight and extended at an angle to the floor. Lift one leg waist high. Slowly return your leg to the floor. Do the same with the other leg. Repeat five times with each leg.

Partial sit-up to strengthen stomach muscles



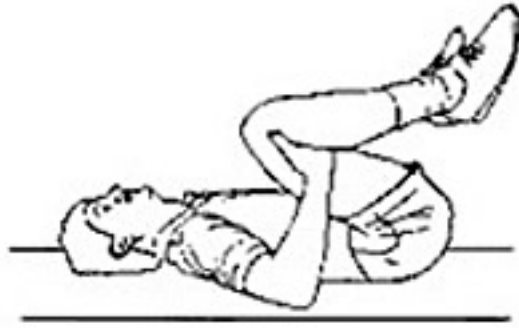
Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on floor. Slowly raise your head and shoulders off the floor and reach with both hands toward your knees. Count to 10. Repeat five times.

Back leg swing to strengthen hip and back muscles



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.

Exercises to decrease the strain on your back



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.

(For more information on "Prevent Injuries America!®," call the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons' public service telephone number 1-800-824-BONES (2663).)