

# LOWER BACK PAIN

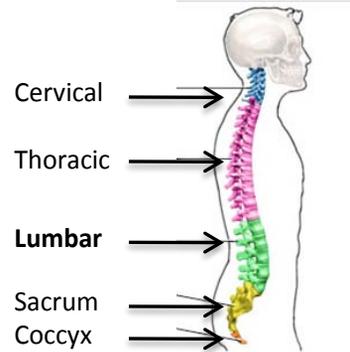
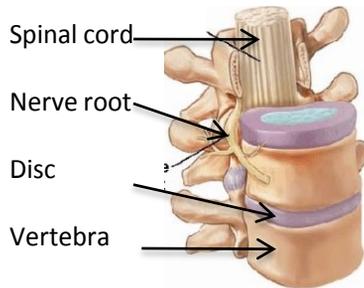
## Exercise guide



# EXERCISE GUIDE

One of the core messages for people suffering with lower back pain is to **REMAIN ACTIVE**. This leaflet will help to guide you through various exercises, activities and positions which can help to alleviate or to avoid lower back pain.

## PHYSIOLOGY OF THE SPINE:

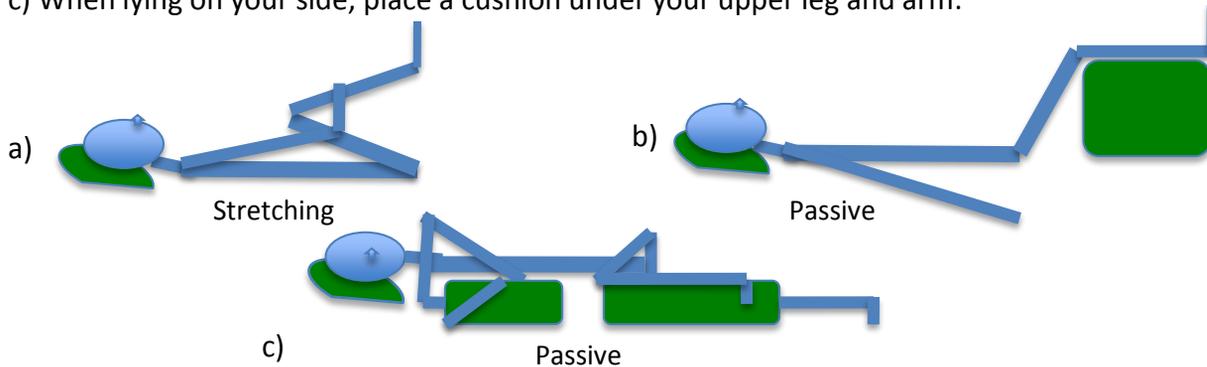


Possible causes/exacerbating factors of lumbar pain are bad posture, lack of exercise, excess weight, repetitive and incorrect movements, stress...

## STEP 1: POSITIONS WHICH EASE ACUTE LOWER BACK PAIN

Remember to breathe deeply and regularly whilst stretching and exercising, this will help you to oxygenate the body, eliminate carbon dioxide and to relax fully.

- a) Lie on your back, bend your legs and slowly pull your knees up to your chest, breathing out as you pull in:
- b) When lying on your back in bed, bend your knees and place a cushion under your calves:
- c) When lying on your side, place a cushion under your upper leg and arm:

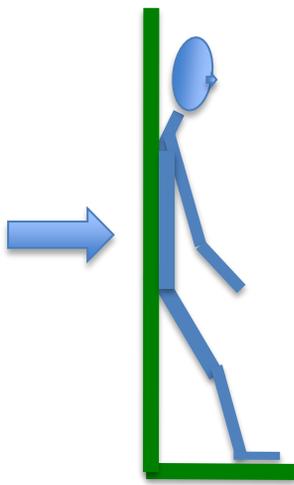


## STEP 2: HOW TO MANAGE & PREVENT LOWER BACK PAIN / THE PELVIC TILT

The pelvic tilt is crucial and must be fully mastered before attempting any lower back exercises. It not only helps to ease lower back pain but also strengthens the support muscles around the lower back and abdominals and is vital in maintaining the spine in its correct position.

- a) Pelvic tilt Position 1: lie on your back with your knees bent, your feet flat on the floor. Relax your abdomen and inhale through your nose, then press your lower back into the floor, exhaling through your mouth **tightening your abdominal muscles and pressing your lower back into the floor**. Hold this position for a few seconds, relax and start again:





b) Pelvic tilt Position 2: Stand and lean back against a wall with **your legs slightly bent** and your feet forwards, away from the wall. Inhale and then exhale as you **tighten your buttocks and abdominal muscles and press your lower back into the wall**. Your shoulders and head should be relaxed. Hold this position for a few seconds, relax and start again:

c) Once you have mastered the pelvic tilt, you should be able to do it when simply standing (legs slightly apart and bent):



### STEP 3: STRETCHING & EXERCISES

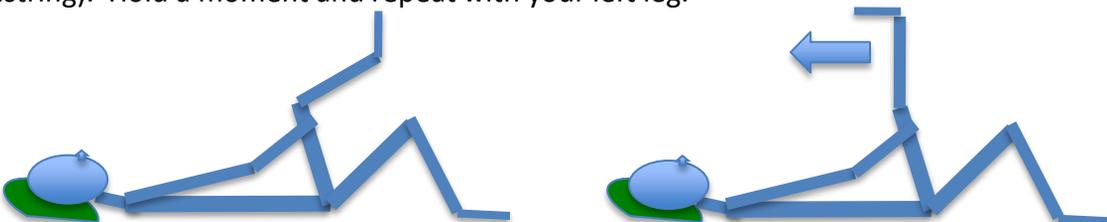
If you have a herniated disk or other disk problem, please contact your health care provider before attempting these exercises. If you are experiencing an acute attack of lumbar pain, wait until it has eased before attempting the exercises.

Exercises that stretch and strengthen the muscles of your abdomen, spine and legs will help you maintain a good posture and to keep your spine in its correct position.

To be effective, the exercises need to be carried out **REGULARLY** (10mins every day) and **TENACIOUSLY** (over several months at least). Movements should be smooth and measured with no jarring, they should **NOT** provoke pain.

a) **HAMSTRING STRETCH:**

Lie on your back and repeat the pelvic tilt as seen in step 2a), ensuring that your lower back is pressed into the floor. Place your left leg down with knee slightly bent. Hold your right thigh in both hands so that your knee is pointing to the ceiling. Straighten your right leg. You should feel a stretch at the back of your thigh (hamstring). Hold a moment and repeat with your left leg.



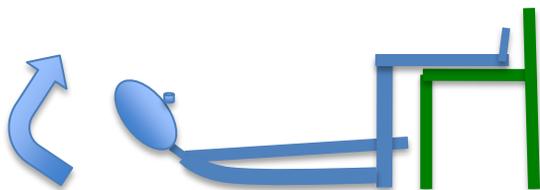
## b) CAT STRETCH:

Get on your hands and knees (hands below shoulders and knees below hips), let your head drop down and then arch your back up as high as it will go. Hold the position then repeat several times. Make sure you keep your back flat when you release the position, do not let your back sag.



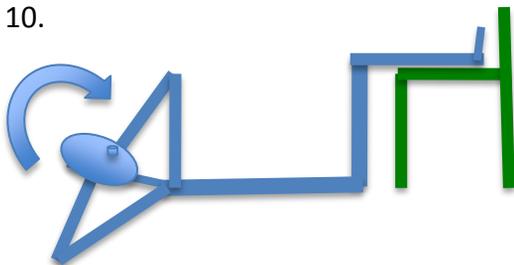
## c) PARTIAL CURL EXERCISE:

This exercise helps to strengthen the central abdominal muscles. Lie on your back with your legs bent and resting on a chair. Tighten your abdominal muscles and press your lower back into the ground. Keeping your chin off your chest and with your hands stretched out in front of you, curl your upper body forward until your shoulders clear the floor. Exhale as you come up. Hold then relax down. Repeat 10 times. Build to 3 sets of 10



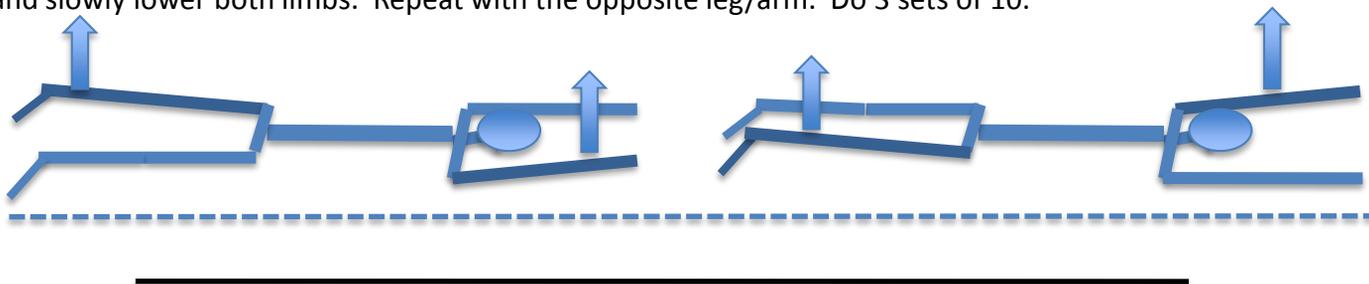
## d) PARTIAL TWIST EXERCISE:

This exercise helps to strengthen the waist muscles. Begin as with exercise c) but instead of keeping your arms outstretched, place your hands behind your head and lift one shoulder blade off the ground at a time without pulling on the neck. Exhale as you come up. Hold then relax down. Repeat 10 times on each side. Build to 3 sets of 10.



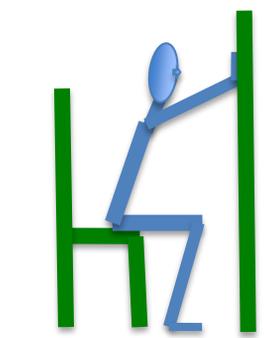
## e) DORSAL MUSCLES EXERCISE:

Lie on your front. Tighten your buttocks and abdominal muscles. Slowly lift one leg off the floor by a few centimetres, keeping your leg straight. At the same time lift the opposite arm by a few centimetres. Hold and slowly lower both limbs. Repeat with the opposite leg/arm. Do 3 sets of 10.

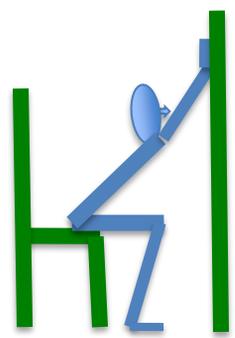


**SPORTS:** Regular physical activity is usually highly beneficial in helping to maintain a healthy lower back. Simply maintaining your regular daily activities or sports such as walking, cycling and swimming (in particular the back-stroke) can help strengthen your back. However some sports may be harmful because of rough contact or twisting such as football, rugby, volleyball, karate...etc..

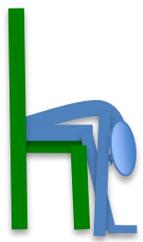
**REGULARLY STOP AND STRETCH THROUGHOUT THE DAY, EVEN WHEN AT WORK:**



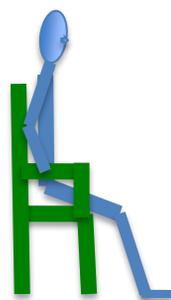
1)  
Sit a foot away from the wall, with your arms stretched up and your hands against the wall.



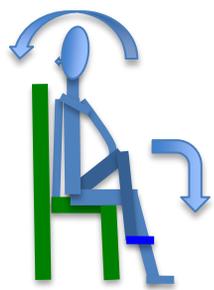
2)  
Press your upper body forward and down, look up. Repeat 10 x



Let yourself fall forwards, head between the knees, arms hanging down. Hold 1 to 2 min. then slowly roll back up, one vertebrae at a time.

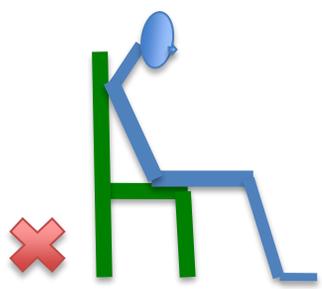


Push up from the armrests with both arms and allow your lower body to relax, feeling your back stretching out.



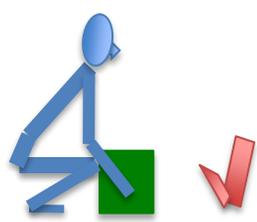
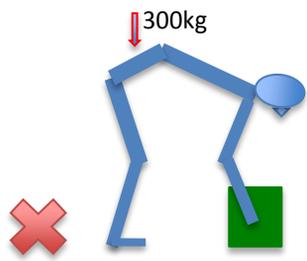
Cross your left leg over your right. Keeping your back straight, place your right hand on your left knee, the other hand behind your back and twist. Hold, then repeat in the opposite direction.

**POSTURE WHILST SEATED AT WORK:**

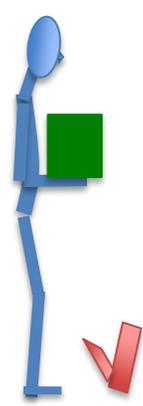
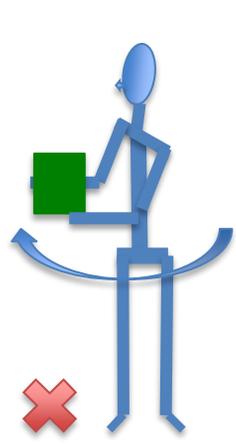


Sit with your buttocks against the back of the chair to ensure correct lumbar support. Both feet should be placed firmly on the ground.

**POSTURE WHIST LIFTING:**



Bend your legs to pick up an object. Never lean forwards



Hold the load close to your body. Never turn and lift at the same time.