

# Back Exercises

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## Buttock Stretch .....

**Instructions:** Lie on your back with the right leg bent and the foot resting on the floor. Cross the left leg over with the left ankle placed above the right knee and let the left knee open outward. Easily lift the right foot from the floor and bring it toward your chest.

You may hold the back of the left leg and gently pull it toward you. Repeat on the other side. Do this exercise up to 10 times.

**Objective:** To stretch (i.e.) the piriformis and external rotators of the hip.

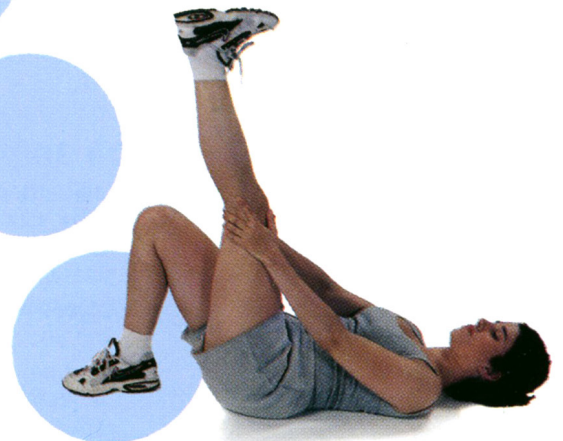
**Caution:** Avoid back strain by keeping the lower back against the mat. Do not hold your breath.

## Hamstring Stretching .....

**Instructions:** Lie on your back with both knees bent. Place your hands behind the left knee, or place a sheet around the foot. Slowly straighten the leg, feeling the stretch in the back of the thigh. Hold the stretch for 10 seconds. Repeat on the other side. Do this exercise up to 10 times.

**Objective:** To stretch the muscles in the back of the thigh of the straight leg.

**Caution:** Avoid pulling the leg too close to your body. Stop the exercise if pain occurs below the knee.



## Pelvic Tilt .....

**Instructions:** Lie on your back with knees bent. Tighten the muscles in your stomach and squeeze your buttocks together, pushing your low back into the floor. Hold to the count of 10. Do this exercise up to 10 times.

**Objective:** To strengthen the lower abdominal muscles and to increase low back mobility.

**Caution:** Do not lift hips up while performing the exercise. If this movement causes pain below the knee, stop the exercise.



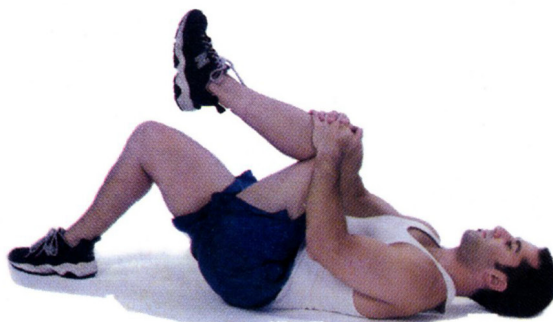


## Abdominal Curl-up .....

**Instructions:** Lie on your back with knees bent. Tighten your stomach muscles. With your arms across your chest (or straight in front of you, or behind your neck), raise head and shoulder blades off the floor. Hold to the count of 10. Do this exercise up to 10 times.

**Objective:** To strengthen the abdominal muscles.

**Caution:** If this movement causes pain below the knee, stop the exercise.



## Knee to Chest .....

**Instructions:** Lie on your back with your knees bent. Pull one knee toward your chest. Hold to the count of 10. Repeat on the other side. Do this exercise up to 10 times.

**Objective:** To stretch the lower back muscles.

**Caution:** If this movement causes pain in the lower back and radiates below the knee, stop the exercise.

## Arch and Curve .....

**Instructions:** Assume an all-fours position. Allow your back to arch. Then curve your back upward at the waist level, tightening your stomach muscles.

**Objective:** To stretch and strengthen the back and abdominal muscles.

**Caution:** Keep elbows straight. If this movement causes pain in lower back and radiates below the knee, stop the exercise.



## Pelvic Lift .....

**Instructions:** Lie on your back with knees bent. Squeeze your buttocks together and lift your hips off the floor.

**Objective:** To strengthen the buttock muscles.

**Caution:** If this movement causes pain in lower back and radiates below the knee, stop the exercise.

## Press-up .....

**Instructions:** Lie on your stomach with a pillow under your waist. Place your hands at shoulder level. Push up with your arms and raise the upper trunk off the floor. Keep pelvis on the floor and let the back sag.

**Objective:** To stretch the abdominal muscles and to increase back mobility.

**Caution:** If this movement causes pain in lower back and radiates below the knee, stop the exercise.



## Back Bending I .....

**Instructions:** Standing. Place your hands on the small of your back. Bend backwards at the waist, keeping your knees as straight as possible. Do this especially after prolonged sitting.

**Objective:** To increase back mobility.

**Caution:** If this movement causes pain in lower back and radiates below the knee, stop the exercise.

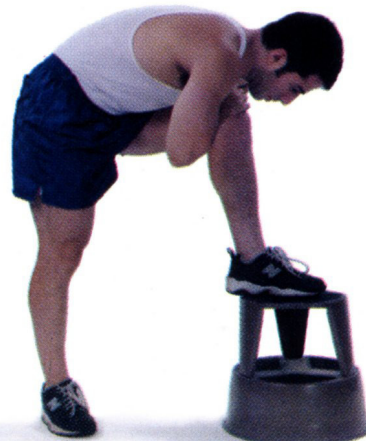


## Back Bending II .....

**Instructions:** Standing. Place one foot on a stool. Lean over the leg that is on the stool and let your upper body hang on it.

**Objective:** To stretch back muscles.

**Caution:** If this movement causes pain in the lower back and radiates below the knee, stop the exercise.





# Back Tips

**To make your life less stressful for your back, you might want to use this checklist:**

Lifting	Know your own strength: lift what you can handle. Always lift and carry close to your body. Bend your knees and make your legs do the work. Don't twist your back: turn with your feet.
Sitting	Use an upright chair. Try a folded towel in the small of your back. Get up and stretch every 20–30 minutes.
Standing	Try putting one foot on a low box or stool. Have your work surface at a comfortable height.
Driving	Adjust your seat from time to time. Try a folded towel or pillow in the small of your back.
Activity	20–30 minutes walking, cycling or swimming every day. Gradually increase physical activity.
Sleeping	Some people prefer a firm mattress – or try boards beneath your mattress.
Relax	Learn how to reduce stress. Use relaxation techniques, such as this simple breathing technique:

As you inhale, let your stomach expand:



As you exhale, let your stomach contract:



As you breathe out tell yourself to relax and release the muscle tension in your body. Take three slow and deep breaths this way before and after you exercise or when ever you feel tension. Try to practice this in a quiet place each day for 10 minutes.