

For more information about pain management resources, visit [pami.emergency.med.jax.ufl.edu](http://pami.emergency.med.jax.ufl.edu) or contact PAMI at [pami@jax.ufl.edu](mailto:pami@jax.ufl.edu) or 904-244-4986.



## Preventing and Relieving Back Pain

### What to Do When Back Pain Starts

- It is important to keep moving to some degree — gentle stretching, walking, and changing positions can be useful.
- Modify activity levels for a few days to avoid strenuous lifting, bending, or twisting.
- While resting, try lying in positions that put your back into a neutral posture.
- The back side of this handout provides several exercises to help prevent and relieve back pain.

### Methods for Relieving Back Pain

#### What can I do for ongoing back pain?

- Follow a balanced diet to maintain a healthy weight. Excess weight puts more pressure on your back.
- Stay active with gentle exercise such as walking or swimming.

#### What can I do for temporary relief?

- For an acute injury/strain, ice and an NSAID medication, such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), or if you cannot take an NSAID, try acetaminophen (Tylenol).
- Use ice packs on the painful region for 20-30 minutes at a time.
- If your muscles feel tense or tight, try a heat pack for 20-30 minutes at a time, or gentle

### When to Call Your Doctor or Health Care Provider

- Your pain is so bad you can't move around.
- Your leg, foot, groin, or rectal area feels numb.
- You have fever, nausea, vomiting, weakness or sweating.
- Your pain does not decrease after 2-3 weeks.
- Your pain was caused by an injury.
- You lose control of your bladder or bowels.

### Preventing Back Strain

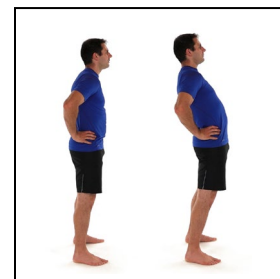
- **Lifting:** Lift by bending in your hips and knees, rather than bending from your back.
- **Moving heavy objects:** Push with both hands rather than pulling heavy objects.
- **Sitting:** Sit with a neutral posture, using a soft lumbar support roll to promote the natural curvature of your lower back, and avoid slouching.
- **Shoes:** Wear supportive shoes, seeking out options with arch support.
- **Change positions:** Try to avoid any one position for too long. If you need to stand for extended periods, try shifting your weight between both feet or alternate placing one foot on a small step. If you need to stand for extended periods, take frequent short standing/walking breaks.

**Check with your health care provider before starting exercises.**

# Stretches & Exercises for Back Pain Relief & Prevention

## (1) Back Extensions:

- Standing with feet about hip width apart (leaning against a countertop for balance if needed)
- Support yourself with your hands at your waist
- Gently bend back into a comfortable stretch, then slowly return upright
- Do 10-20 of these at a time, frequently throughout the day

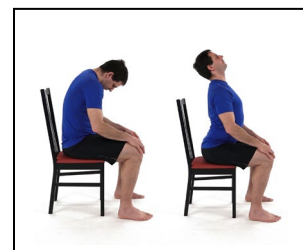


## (2) Lower Trunk Rotation Stretch:

- Lying on your back with your knees bent and feet flat
- Gently rock both of your knees to one side as you exhale
- Slowly bring your knees back to the center as you inhale
- Gently rock both of your knees to the other side as you exhale
- Repeat for 2-3 minutes, alternating sides

## (3) Seated Cat/Camel Stretch:

- Sitting comfortably in a supportive chair with hands resting in your lap
- As you inhale, gently extend your trunk and draw your shoulders back for a gentle stretch
- As you exhale, gently tuck your pelvis under and round your trunk for a stretch in the opposite direction
- Repeat this for 2-3 minutes, moving slowly with your breath



## (4) Core Activation Exercise:

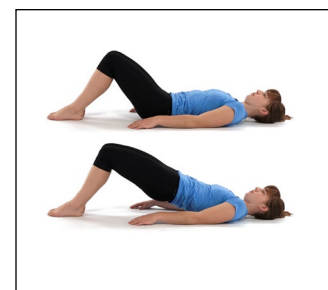


- Lying on your back with your knees bent and feet flat
- Without holding your breath, gently draw your lower abdominal muscles towards your spine, as if you were flattening your back into the surface
- You can feel for this muscle activation with your fingers at your lower belly
- Hold for 10 seconds at a time, and do about 10 repetitions, once

or twice per day

## (5) Bridging Exercise:

- Lying on your back with your knees bent and feet flat
- Gently squeeze your gluteal (buttock) muscles
- Use those muscles to slowly lift your pelvis and back off the surface
  - Slowly lower back down and relax
  - Do this about 10-20 times, once or twice per day



To watch a brief video about back pain exercises, scan the QR code.