



Your guide to three exercises for treating back pain

Do you suffer from back pain? Lower back pain is the most common form of back pain, but some have pain in the middle and upper parts of their back as well.

Back pain occurs for many different reasons, such as herniated discs, arthritis, traumatic injury and poor posture. However, one of the most common causes of both acute and chronic back pain is weak and stiff muscles.

Three exercises that can help reduce and prevent back pain

The muscles in your back and your abdomen help provide stability and mobility for the spine. When healthy, they help to support your upper body weight, which takes some strain off your spine. However, when these muscles are stiff or weak due to lack of activity, pressure and pain increase on the spine. Not to mention, pain increases in the muscles themselves.

Exercising and stretching can help improve the strength and flexibility of these muscles, which helps them stay in better shape for supporting your spine. Our physical therapists

can guide you through many exercises and other treatments that can help you reduce and prevent back pain. However, there are three exercises you can try at home or wherever else you're comfortable to start treating your back pain right now.

Our video guide can help you visually learn these exercises, but you may not always have access to video. That's why we've covered the three exercises in detail below. Feel free to download this guide and save it on your device or print it out for reference whenever you're ready to exercise.

The three simple exercises for back pain you can try today are on the following pages.

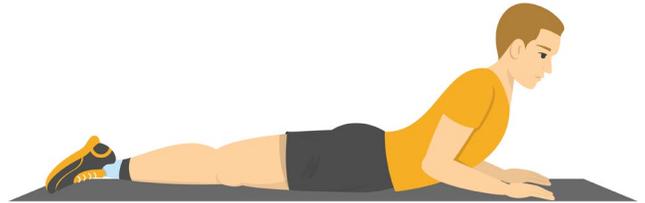


#1 Extension in lying

Extension in lying is an exercise that stretches many muscles in your back and core to help reduce and prevent back pain.

To do an extension in lying exercise, lie facedown on the ground. You may want to do this on a carpeted floor or on a yoga mat for comfort. Bring your hands up beneath your shoulders as if you're about to do a pushup.

Once in position, slowly push up the top half of your body as far as you can while leaving your hips and legs relaxed. Hold this position for about five seconds, and repeat the exercise for up to 10 repetitions. Try to stretch farther with each repetition, exhaling at the top of the stretch to allow it to set in deeper.



#2 Transverse abdominis (TVA) bracing

The TVA muscle is a large muscle in the core that provides stability for the lower back. A weak and stiff TVA muscle is often the culprit of lower back pain. The TVA bracing exercise forces the TVA to contract and release, which helps improve its strength and flexibility.

To start TVA bracing, lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Your spine should be in a neutral resting position, which means there should be a small space between your lower back and the ground. Rest your hands on your stomach with your fingertips along the inside of your hip bone.

Once you're in position, draw your abdomen inward while keeping your spine in place. Focus on bracing your stomach as if you're trying to push your belly button downward toward your spine. Your stomach should not be protruding upward in this position. There should be a slightly rounded, balanced appearance in your abdomen while performing this exercise. When you're confident you're performing the exercise correctly, hold the position for about 10 seconds and release. Repeat up to 10 times or as many times as comfortable.



#3 Postural correction seated (lumbar roll)

Sitting for too long with poor posture is one of the other significant contributing factors to lower back pain. Using a lumbar roll can help correct your sitting posture to help reduce and prevent back pain.

To use a lumbar roll, start in a sitting position and place a roll between your spine and the back of the chair along the natural curvature of your spine. You can purchase a lumbar roll made specifically for this exercise or use a rolled-up towel as an alternative.

When you're in position, bring your head up straight as if it's being pulled upward by a string. This will guide your spine in a naturally straight position that puts less strain on your back. This is the position you should focus on using while sitting.



If you're unsure about whether you can safely perform any of these exercises, consult your doctor or physical therapist first — they can help determine whether you can and recommend alternatives if these exercises are not right for you.



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Are you ready to take further steps in treating back pain? Our physical therapists at Excel Sports & Physical Therapy can examine your condition and guide you through exercises and stretches that will be most helpful. **Contact our team today** for more information about treatment and a complimentary screening.