

EXERCISES FOR THE SPINE

THE MOST IMPORTANT EXERCISES FOR A HEALTHY BACK

Neck exercises

Neck muscles are important for posture. Exercises help strengthen them and prevent neck pain.

Shoulder girdle 1

Shoulder girdle exercises improve posture and reduce shoulder pain.

Shoulder girdle 2

These exercises target the shoulder girdle muscles to improve flexibility and strength.

Clavical exercises 1

Clavical exercises help improve posture and reduce neck and shoulder pain.

Clavical exercises 2

These exercises target the clavical muscles to improve posture and reduce neck and shoulder pain.

Arm, chest and shoulder exercises

Exercises for the arm, chest, and shoulder help improve posture and reduce pain.

Back exercises 1

Back exercises help improve posture and reduce back pain.

Back exercises 2

These exercises target the back muscles to improve posture and reduce back pain.

Back exercises 3

Back exercises help improve posture and reduce back pain.

Back exercises 4

These exercises target the back muscles to improve posture and reduce back pain.

Lateral body exercises

Lateral body exercises help improve posture and reduce back pain.

Straight abdominal exercises

Straight abdominal exercises help improve posture and reduce back pain.

Diagonal abdominal exercises

Diagonal abdominal exercises help improve posture and reduce back pain.

Water exercises

Water exercises are gentle on the joints and help improve posture and reduce back pain.

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Exercise for the Spine

- Exercise will increase the blood flow to the back, bringing needed oxygen and nutrients and washing away toxic metabolites.
- Exercise will strengthen the muscles around the spine, helping to take the pressure off of the bones and other static structures in the back.
- Exercise will help maintain flexibility, which will help prevent tight muscles that pull and torque the spine.
- Exercise will help maintain a healthy weight. Excess weight can lead to worsening back pain and leg pain.
- Staying active helps with emotional and mental health as well. Getting up and moving gets the blood and endorphins flowing and improves one's overall outlook, which in turn helps reduce pain and improve physical symptoms.

Prone Arm/Leg Raises—Lie on stomach keeping neck in line with straight legs, and arms outstretched overhead.

- Slowly raise and lower each arm and leg, one at a time
- 5 repetitions on each limb
- Work alternate limbs by lifting right arm and left leg at the same time
- 5 repetitions; change to work reverse pair



Arm/Leg Raises—This exercise is similar to the prone arm/leg raises, except done with hands and knees on the floor, with hands directly under shoulders and knees directly under hips.

- To work *arms*, slowly straighten the right arm, reaching forward and keeping neck and back straight,
- Hold 5 seconds; slowly lower arm to starting position
- 3-5 repetitions on each side
- To work *legs*, slowly straighten leg without arching back, extending the leg behind the body
- Hold 5 seconds; slowly return to starting position
- 3-5 repetitions on each side
- To work *alternate pairs of limbs*, raising the right arm and left leg at the same time
- Hold position for 5 seconds
- 3-5 repetitions; change to work reverse pair

Cat Curls—Get down on all-fours with knees and hands on the floor with back and neck in a neutral, straight position

- Slowly tighten lower abdominals, rounding the back towards the ceiling
- Hold for 5 seconds
- Release and return to neutral position
- Arch the back slightly
- Hold for 5 seconds
- Release and return to neutral position



Water Exercise/Knee-to-Chest—Stand with right hand holding on to side of pool

- Raise left knee slowly to 90 degree angle
- Grab behind left knee with left hand and slowly bring knee up into chest
- Hold 5 seconds
- 3-5 repetitions per side

Exercise Ball/Back Extensions—Lay over the **exercise ball** on stomach with legs straight and feet flexed to be up on toes; rest hands on side of ball, but do not use arms to push up

- Slowly lift head and chest off ball (do not strain or overextend)
- Hold for 5 seconds
- Return to starting position



- 3-5 repetitions