Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Low Back Pain Exercises Level 1

Version number: **2**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Low Back Pain Exercises Level 1

Patient Information

Musculoskeletal (MSK) Physiotherapy Services

Disclaimer

Not all exercises are suitable for everyone, and while every precaution was taken in selecting these exercises, they do not come without risks. If you have any concerns regarding injury, or whether or not you should partake in the exercises, then you should consult your General Practitioner (GP) or Physiotherapist prior to commencing any exercises shown here.

It is quite normal to feel some discomfort following exercise, but it is important that this discomfort eases within 2 hours of finishing the exercise and doesn't have an overall negative effect on your symptoms.

The exercise plans shown here are designed to be used as a guide and a point of reference; they are not exhaustive and can be modified and progressed under the supervision of your physiotherapist.

Instructions

- Aim to do the exercise plan 3 to 4 times per week, with at least 1 day off in between to allow for recovery.
- Each exercise is repeated a number of times (for example, 5 or 10 times) to build up strength and flexibility. The repetitions make a 'set'.
- The number of repetitions is a guide and can be increased or decreased according to pain levels. If the exercise causes pain that lasts for more than 2 hours after finishing the exercise, then decrease the repetitions.
- Complete each exercise slowly and in a controlled manner; you should take your time and not rush. Take 30 seconds rest in between each set.

Contact the Physio department if you find the exercises are making your pain worse overall.

Contact Information

Leigh Health Centre
Telephone: 0300 707 1597

Email: wwl-tr.leighphysio@nhs.net

Platt Bridge Health Centre
Telephone: 0300 707 1772
Email: wwl-tr.mskphysio-bostonhouse@nhs.net

Wigan Health Centre, Boston House
Telephone: 0300 707 1113
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Therapy Department- Wrightington Hospital
Telephone: 01257 256305
Email: wwl-tr.therapyadmin@nhs.net

Low Back Pain Level 1 - Exercises 1 to 10



1. Lumbar Extensions (S
   with No Hold)

Standing upright, feet shoul
width apart and squeezing
shoulder blades together.

Place hands on your hips to
support your back; before b
as far backwards as possible.

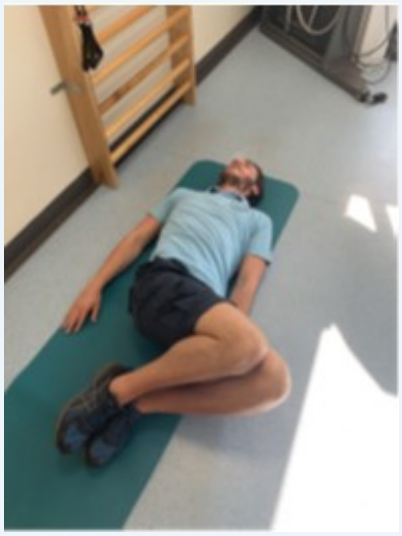
Remain in a pain free range of movement; returning to the
once completed.

Ensuring bending from your back only and not swinging bo
and knees forwards.

Keep the movement at a Slow Pace.

Severe pain will indicate you have gone too far back.

Repeat x10.



1. Knee Rolls

Lying on your back, knees to
and bent.

Roll knees from side to side, keeping your upper trunk and
shoulders flat and in contact with the ground.

Keep the movement at a Moderate Pace.

Alter feet positioning (closer or further away from buttock)
different segments of your spine.

Repeat x 30.



1. Glute Bridge (Double Leg)

Lying on your back; knees bent upwards and feet flat, sho
width apart. Aim to get your feet as close to your buttocks
possible.

Contract/tighten your deep core muscles; squeeze your bu
muscles together.

Lifting your buttock off the floor; hold this bridge position a
as possible for 2 seconds, before slowly lowering down to
starting position.

Repeat x10.



1. Front Plank (on Kne
   second Hold

Lying on your front, elbow
directly underneath the
shoulders; push up throug
elbows/shoulders to raise your chest and pelvis off the floo
Keep your body a few inches off the floor.

Ensure a straight line from your shoulders to your knees.

Contract and tighten your abdominals throughout this exer
keeping a flat spine.

Repeat x 5.



1. Pelvic Tilts (Sitting)

Straight back, sitting down, ke
neutral spine position. Hands on your knees and feet (sho
width apart).

Contract/tighten your deep core muscles (by pulling your t
button in) before starting the movement.



Whilst keeping these deep core muscles engaged; gently
pelvis forwards and backwards. This is done by alternatin
between a flat back (1st picture, forward tilt) and a rounde
(2nd picture, backwards tilt)

Repeat Exercise for x 30, then relax.



1. Sit – Stand (Supported)

Standing, feet shoulder width a
and toes pointing slightly outwards.

Hands resting on an object out in front for support, or on you
thighs as shown.

Head up, back straight and contract/tighten deep core muscl
(pull tummy button in).

Slowly squat down, sticking your bottom out and keeping you
back straight, until you touch the chair.

Before sitting back fully, push back into standing by pushing
through your heels.

Repeat 3 sets of 10 repetitions.



1. Bent Over Row (Small Weigh

Staggered stance position (as sho
lean forwards onto the back of a chair or counter to support
upper body.

Hold a small, weighted object in the opposite hand. A water
bottle is ideal, or a bag.

Arm begins straight before leading with the shoulder blade to
the weight up until your elbow is in line with your torso.



Make sure you squeeze the shoulder blades back, through th
movement, feeling the muscles between your shoulder blade
working.

Slowly lower the weight down towards ground, straightening
arm. Then repeat.

Repeat 3 sets of 10 repetitions.



1. Romanian Deadlift / RDL (Weightless Bar)

Standing upright, feet shoulder wi
apart and a slight bend in both knees.

Bar/Pole/Walking stick in your hands.

Slowly lower the bar, bending at the hips with back remaining straight.



Lower until you feel a slight stretch on the muscles at the bac the thigh (normally after the bar has just passed the knees).

Drive hips forwards to return to the upright position, squeezin your buttocks.

Repeat 3 sets of 10 repetitions.



1. Standing Knee Raises (Supported)

Stand upright, hands placed out in front, resting on an object support.

Contract/tighten your deep core muscles (pull your tummy bu in) before you start the movement.

Lift your knee upwards to 90°, pause for 2 seconds at the top the movement and then slowly lower back down to starting position.

Keep deep core muscles contracted throughout the whole of movement.

Repeat 3 sets of 10 repetitions.



1. Farmers Carry

Maintain an erect and straight spine.

Keep deep core muscles contracted (pull tummy button i throughout the whole of the movement; keep the muscles around your shoulder contracted to support the weight.

Holding the weight (starting small, progressing to moderate w difficulty; this could be a bag filled with objects) at your side.

Walk 20ft, turn and then walk 20ft back to the starting point.

Then repeat using the other arm.

Adaptations:

If difficult: reduce the weighted object or alter technique to perform by holding a small weight in both hands.

Repeat x 5 on each arm.



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