

Low Back Pain Exercises Level 1

Patient Information

Musculoskeletal (MSK) Physiotherapy Services



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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 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.

Low Back Pain Level 1 – Exercises 1 to 10



1. Lumbar Extensions (Standing with No Hold)

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

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

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

Ensuring bending from your back **only** and **not** swinging both hips and knees forwards.

Keep the movement at a **Slow Pace**.

Severe pain will indicate you have gone too far back. Repeat x10.



2. Knee Rolls

Lying on your back, knees together 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) to work different segments of your spine.

Repeat x 30.



3. Glute Bridge (Double Leg)

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

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

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

Repeat x10.



4. Front Plank (on Knees) 30 second Hold

Lying on your front, elbows directly underneath the shoulders; push up through your elbows/shoulders to raise your chest and pelvis off the floor. 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 exercise, keeping a flat spine.

Repeat x 5.



5. Pelvic Tilts (Sitting)

Straight back, sitting down, keep a neutral spine position. Hands on your knees and feet (shoulder width apart).

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



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

Repeat Exercise for x 30, then relax.



6. Sit – Stand (Supported)

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

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

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

Slowly squat down, sticking your bottom out and keeping your 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.



7. Bent Over Row (Small Weight)

Staggered stance position (as shown); 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 pull the weight up until your elbow is in line with your torso.

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

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

Repeat 3 sets of 10 repetitions.





8. Romanian Deadlift / RDL (Weightless Bar)

Standing upright, feet shoulder width 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 back of the thigh (**normally after the bar has just passed the knees**).

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

Repeat 3 sets of 10 repetitions.



9. Standing Knee Raises (Supported)

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

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

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

Keep deep core muscles contracted throughout the whole of the movement.

Repeat 3 sets of 10 repetitions.



10. Farmers Carry

Maintain an erect and straight spine.

Keep deep core muscles contracted (pull tummy button in) 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 with 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.

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

Contact Us

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Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the positives and negatives of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request.

For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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