



Exercises/stretches for lower back pain

Knee roll



Start position: Lie on your back. Place a small flat cushion or book under your head. Keep your knees bent and together. Keep your upper body relaxed and your chin gently tucked in.

Action: Roll your knees to one side, followed by your pelvis, keeping both shoulders on the floor. Hold the stretch for one deep breath and return to the starting position. Repeat eight to 10 times, alternating sides.

Tips:

- Only move as far as feels comfortable.
- Place a pillow between your knees for comfort.

Back extensions

Stretches and mobilises the spine backwards



Start position: Lie on your stomach, and prop yourself on your elbows, lengthening your spine. Keep your shoulders back and neck long.

Action: Keeping your neck long, arch your back up by pushing down on your hands. You should feel a gentle stretch in the stomach muscles as you arch backwards. Breathe and hold for five to 10 seconds. Return to the starting position.

Repeat eight to 10 times.

Tips:

- Don't bend your neck backwards.
- Keep your hips grounded.

Pelvic tilts

Stretches and strengthens the lower back



Start position: Lie on your back. Place a small, flat cushion or book under your head. Bend your knees and keep your feet straight and hip-width apart. Keep your upper body relaxed and your chin gently tucked in.

Action: Gently flatten your low back into the floor and contract your stomach muscles. Now tilt your pelvis towards your heels until you feel a gentle arch in your lower back, feeling your back muscles contracting and return to the starting position.

Repeat 10 to 15 times, tilting your pelvis back and forth in a slow rocking motion.

Tips:

- Keep your deep abdominals working throughout.
- Don't press down through the neck, shoulders or feet.

Modification

Place one hand on your stomach and the other under your lower back to feel the correct muscles working.

Progression

Raise hips completely off the floor, squeeze your glutes together. Ensure you have a straight line through your knees, hips to shoulders. Hold at the top for a count of 5 and lower.

Repeat 8-10 times.

Partial crunches



Partial crunches can help strengthen your back and stomach muscles. Lie with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Cross arms over your chest or put hands behind your neck. Tighten stomach muscles and raise your shoulders off the floor. Breathe out as you raise your shoulders. Don't lead with your elbows or use arms to pull your neck off the floor. Hold for a second, then slowly lower back down. Repeat eight to 12 times. Proper form prevents excessive stress on your lower back. Your feet, tailbone and lower back should remain in contact with the mat at all times.

Single leg raises



Lie on your back with one leg straight and the other leg bent at the knee. Slowly lift the straight leg up about 6 inches and hold briefly. Lower leg slowly. Repeat 10 times, then change legs

Wall sits



Stand 10 to 12 inches from the wall, then lean back until your back is flat against the wall. Slowly slide down until your knees are slightly bent, pressing your lower back into the wall. Hold for a count of five, then carefully slide back up the wall. Repeat five times

Bird-dog/superman



Start on your hands and knees and tighten your stomach muscles. Lift and extend one leg behind you. Keep hips level. Hold for five seconds and then switch to the other leg. Repeat eight to 12 times for each leg and try to lengthen the time you hold each lift. Try lifting and extending your opposite arm for each repetition. This exercise is a great way to learn how to stabilise the lower back during movement of the arms and legs. While doing this exercise don't let the lower back muscles sag. Only raise the limbs to heights where the low back position can be maintained.