

JUST HURT YOUR LOWER BACK? START HERE.

A beginner guide on what to do in the early stages of lower back pain.

BEFORE YOU START

This guide provides general exercise guidance only. It does not diagnose your injury or replace individual medical advice.

DO NOT CONTINUE AND SEEK URGENT MEDICAL ATTENTION IF YOU DEVELOP:

- New loss of bladder or bowel control
- Numbness or loss of sensation around your groin, genitals, buttocks or inner thighs
- Difficulty feeling yourself when wiping after using the toilet
- Significant or worsening leg weakness or numbness
- Significant neurological symptoms affecting both legs

If you're unsure whether this program is appropriate for you, speak with a qualified healthcare professional before starting.

PHASE 1

SETTLE SYMPTOMS & KEEP MOVING

When your back is painful, doing nothing can feel like the safest option.

BUT COMPLETE BED REST ISN'T THE ANSWER.

Our first goal is to find the middle ground between doing too much and doing nothing.

Temporarily reduce activities that significantly aggravate your symptoms while maintaining comfortable movement throughout the day.

THIS MIGHT INCLUDE:

1. Short walks
2. Easy stationary/ recumbent cycling
3. Changing positions regularly
4. Gentle movement that feels comfortable

The goal isn't to smash a workout. It's to find movement your back currently tolerates and build from there.

RELAX & BREATHE

Pain can make us tense up, breathe more rapidly and become increasingly protective of movement.

Slow, controlled breathing can be a useful relaxation strategy when symptoms are heightened.

WHILE COMPLETING THE EXERCISES IN THIS PHASE:

- ☑ Take slow, controlled breaths
- ☑ Allow your shoulders to soften
- ☑ Avoid unnecessarily bracing your entire body
- ☑ Breathe comfortably into your abdomen and lower rib cage

We're not trying to "breathe the injury away."

WE'RE SIMPLY TRYING TO CREATE A CALMER ENVIRONMENT WHERE YOU CAN BEGIN EXPLORING MOVEMENT AGAIN.

PHASE 1
MOVEMENT OPTIONS

SEATED SCIATIC NERVE SLIDER

A gentle movement designed to help the sciatic nerve move more freely through the leg. Keep the movement controlled and comfortable rather than forcing a stretch.

CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO



BACK EXTENSION

This exercise aims to reintroduce lumbar extension and normal spinal movement. Start with a small range of motion and gradually build as your confidence improves.

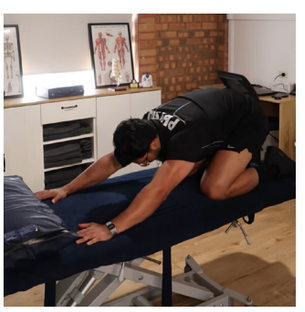
CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO



CHILD'S POSE

A gentle position that encourages lumbar flexion through the lower back and hips. Focus on slow, relaxed breathing and only move as far as feels comfortable.

CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO



KNEE ROCKS

A simple movement to gently rotate and mobilise your lower back. Keep your shoulders relaxed and let your knees move side to side in a comfortable range.

CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO



You don't need to do them all.

Trial the movements and CHOOSE 1–2 that feel comfortable or leave you moving more freely afterwards.

DOSAGE

3–4 TIMES PER WEEK

With a rest day between sessions where possible

2 SETS X 10–20 REPS

The range is intentionally broad. If 10 feels like enough, stop there. If it feels good, gradually work towards 20.

LESS IS MORE DURING THIS PHASE.

If an exercise significantly worsens your symptoms, particularly increasing or spreading symptoms into your leg, stop and seek professional guidance.

ON YOUR OTHER DAYS

Keep active with comfortable walking, cycling or general daily movement.

Start with what you can tolerate and gradually build from there.

WHEN SHOULD I MOVE TO PHASE 2?

This isn't a strict
"WEEK 1 ENDS, THEREFORE PHASE 2 STARTS"
program.

Everyone progresses differently.

As your symptoms become more manageable and you're feeling more comfortable moving, you can begin introducing the exercises from Phase 2.

You also don't necessarily need to completely stop Phase 1.

If one or two of those movements continue to make your back feel good

KEEP THEM IN!

PHASE 2

RESTORE MOVEMENT & STRENGTH

Once symptoms are becoming more manageable,

IT'S TIME TO START REBUILDING.

Your back may feel weak, guarded or even "unstable" after a painful episode.

THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU NEED TO PROTECT IT FOREVER.

Progressive exercise helps rebuild your STRENGTH, MOVEMENT TOLERANCE AND CONFIDENCE.

PHASE 2

RESTORE MOVEMENT & STRENGTH

Continued.

CHAIR SQUAT

A functional strengthening exercise that targets your legs and hips while practicing a movement you use every day. Use the chair for guidance and control rather than simply dropping into the seat.

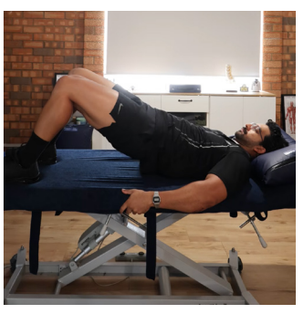
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GLUTE BRIDGE

A exercise for restoring hip extension to support the lower back. Focus on squeezing your glutes as you lift rather than arching through your lower back.

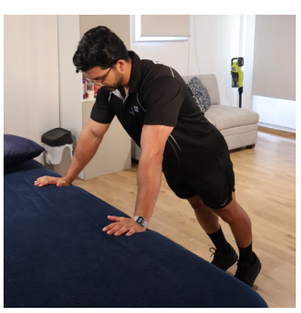
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ELEVATED FRONT PLANK

Increasing confidence in rebuilding trunk rigidity without overcompensation of lower back. Keep your body in a straight line and take steady, long breaths. The goal is to breath normally while maintaining core tension.

CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO



SIDE PLANK

Increasing unilateral trunk stability. Start with an easier variation and focus on maintaining a steady, controlled position.

CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO



DOSAGE

3 TIMES PER WEEK

With a rest day between sessions where possible

CHAIR SQUAT:

3 x 10 - 20

GLUTE BRIDGE:

3 x 10 - 20

FRONT PLANK:

3 comfortable holds (10-40sec)

SIDE PLANK:

3 comfortable holds per side (10-40sec)

HOW TO PROGRESS

FOR SQUATS AND BRIDGES:

Bodyweight 3 x 10 - 20 -> reach 3 x 20 comfortably -> add a light DB/KB -> return to 10 - 12 reps -> build back towards 20.

PLANKS:

Gradually increase your hold time or progress to a harder variation.

On the days between sessions, continue with comfortable walking, cycling or general activity.

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

We're not trying to create a perfectly "stable" spine.

And we're not strengthening your core because your spine is fragile and needs to be protected.

WE'RE REBUILDING YOUR CAPACITY.

After a painful episode, people can become guarded, move less and lose confidence in movements they previously performed without thinking.

PROGRESSIVE EXERCISE GIVES YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO:

- ☑ Start producing force again
- ☑ Restore comfortable movement
- ☑ Rebuild trunk and lower-body strength
- ☑ Increase your tolerance to load
- ☑ Regain confidence in your back
- ☑ Prepare yourself for progressively returning to the gym

Your back doesn't need to feel perfect before you start rebuilding it.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER 4 WEEKS?

For some people, these two phases may be enough to get them moving comfortably and beginning their transition back towards normal gym training.

For others, symptoms may persist or they may need a more

INDIVIDUALISED PROGRESSION.

DON'T FORCE YOURSELF THROUGH THIS PROGRAM SIMPLY BECAUSE FOUR WEEKS HAVE PASSED.

If your symptoms are significantly worsening, you develop new neurological symptoms, or you're struggling to progress, stop and seek assessment from an appropriately qualified healthcare professional.

NEED MORE SPECIFIC HELP?

This guide is intentionally general.

Your injury, training history, symptoms and goals are individual and your return to training may need to be as well.

However, a 4 week beginner gym program has been included below. When you are able to complete phase 2 exercises through a full range of motion, this program can be commenced.

If you'd like a more specific and tailored plan to work back towards your gym goals message me today.

@PHYSIO.REID

or contact me here:

0421 374 680 | JONATHAN@RUCKUSREHAB.COM.AU

BEGINNER WORKOUT
LOWER BACK INTENSITY: EASY

WARM UP	3 SETS
Flamingo	30 Seconds
Sciatic Nerve Slider	20 Reps / Side
Dumbbell / Cable External Rotations	15 Reps / Side

FULL BODY 1	SETS	REPS
Leg Press (Adjust Depth Depending on Symptoms)	3	10
Leg Extensions	3	12
Lat Pull-down	3	10
Wide Grip Cable Row	3	12
Front Plank	3	20-60 Seconds

FULL BODY 2	SETS	REPS
Shoulder Press Machine	3	8
Chest Press Machine	3	10
Glute Bridge Machine	3	8
Dumbbell Split Squat	3	10 / Leg
Cable Bicep Curls	3	15

FULL BODY 3	SETS	REPS
45 Degree Back Extension Hold	3	20-30 Seconds
Hamstring Curls	3	12
Wide Grip Cable Row	3	10
Wall Sit	3	30-60 Seconds
Straight Bar Tricep Extensions	3	15

FULL BODY 4 (OPTIONAL)	SETS	REPS
Incline Dumbbell Bench Press	3	10
Single Arm Bench Supported Lat Pull-down	3	10
Hack Squat	3	10
Machine Abductions	3	10
Machine Calf Raises	3	12
Side Plank	3	20-30 Seconds / Side

DISCLAIMER: The information provided in this program has been written by Physio Reid. The information within is for educational and informational purposes only and is not provided to diagnose, treat or relieve any health or medical conditions. We recommend you speak to your doctor or healthcare professional before commencing any training program. Should you be pregnant, breastfeeding, have any pre-existing medical condition or you suspect you have a medical problem, you should consult your doctor or healthcare professional prior to using the information included in Jonathan's Load Calculator. Should you experience any unexpected, undesirable changes to your health, whether it be physical, mental or emotional, seek medical attention immediately. You agree that by following this program you do so entirely at your own risk. All content included in this "Program" may not be in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or any other means be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or be broadcast, sold or transmitted without the prior permission of Jonathan Reid.