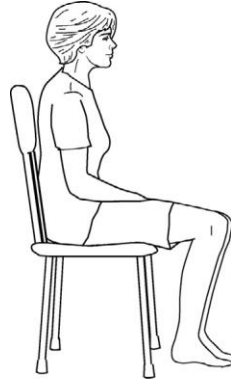


Do's and Don'ts with Low Back Pain

Sitting

Do:

- Sit as little as possible and then only for short periods.
- Place a supportive towel roll at the belt line of the back especially when sitting in a car.
- When getting up from sitting, keep the normal curves in your back. Move to the front of the seat and stand up by straightening your legs. Avoid bending forward at the waist.
- Try to keep the normal curves in your back at all times.



Good



Bad

Don't:

- **Do not** sit on a low soft couch with a deep seat. It will force you to sit with your hips lower than your knees and will round your back. You will lose the normal curve in your back.
- **Do not** place your legs straight out in front of you while sitting (e.g. sitting in the bath tub).

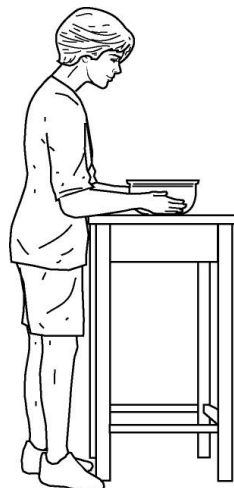
Standing

Do:

- If you must stand for a long period of time, keep one leg up on a foot stool.
- Adapt work heights.

Don't:

- Avoid half bent positions.



Good



Bad

Lifting

Avoid lifting if you can.

Do:

- Use the correct lifting technique. Keep your back straight when lifting. Never stoop or bend forward. Stand close to the load, have a firm footing and wide stance. Kneel on one knee, keeping the back straight. Have a secure grip on the load and lift by straightening your knees. Do a steady lift. Shift your feet to turn and do not twist your back.

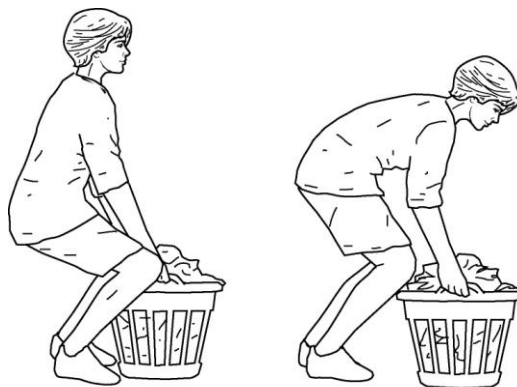


Good

Bad

Don't:

- **Do not** jerk when you lift.
- **Do not** bend over the object you are lifting.



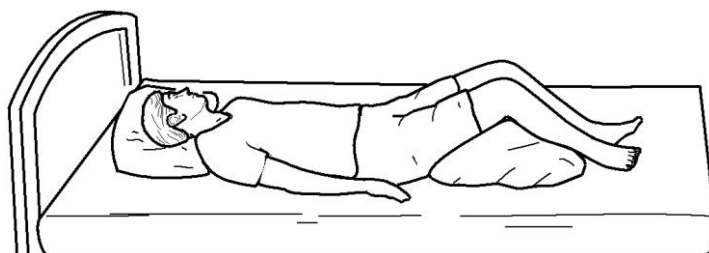
Good

Bad

Lying

Do:

- Sleep on a good firm surface.
- If your bed sags, use slats or plywood supports between the mattress and base to firm it. You also can place the mattress on the floor, a simple but temporary solution.
- You may be more comfortable at night when you use a pillow for support.

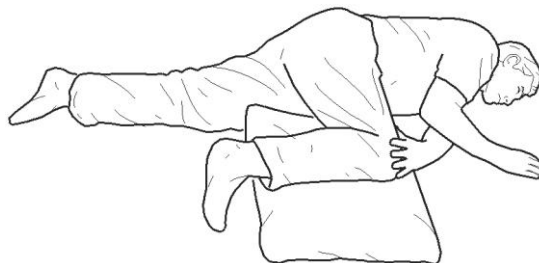


Good

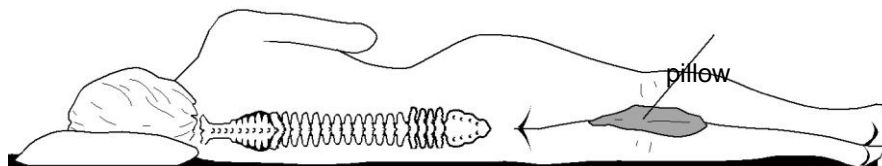
Don't:

- **Do not** sleep on your stomach unless advised to do so by your doctor or physical therapist.

Good



Good



Bending forward

Do:

- Keep the natural curves of your back when
-
- doing these and other activities: making a bed, vacuuming, sweeping or mopping the floor, weeding the garden or raking leaves.



Good



Bad

Coughing and sneezing

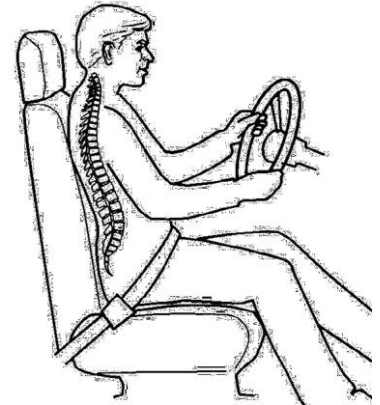
Do:

- Bend backwards to increase the curve of your back while you cough or sneeze.

Driving a car

Do:

- Drive the car as little as possible. It is better to be a passenger than to drive yourself.
- Move the seat forward to the steering wheel. Your seat must be close enough to the wheel to keep the natural curves of your back. If your hips are lower than your knees in this position, raise yourself by sitting on a pillow.



Exercises for low back pain

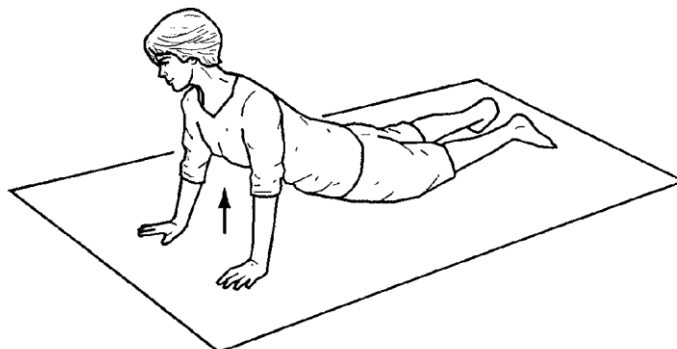
Safety Guidelines

- An increase in your low back pain can be expected with these exercises. This is acceptable as long as your leg symptoms are not increasing.
- If while doing these exercises, your pain worsens or you have new pain or symptoms, stop the exercises and discuss your symptoms with your doctor or physical therapist.
- Stop exercising and let your doctor or physical therapist know right away if you have any change in your bowel or bladder control or any increase in weakness in your leg or foot.

Exercises

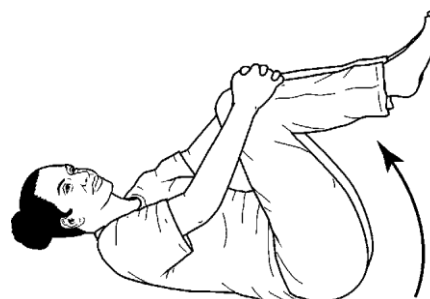
Press-Ups:

Keep your back and buttocks relaxed and use your arms to press up. Concentrate on keeping your hips down and push up your upper body as high as possible.



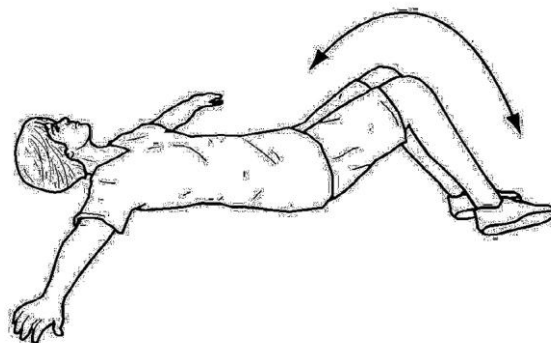
Double Knee to Chest:

Grasp both your knees with your hands and pull toward your shoulders. Hold the stretch for 1 second. Let your knees return, but keep them bent at arms length.



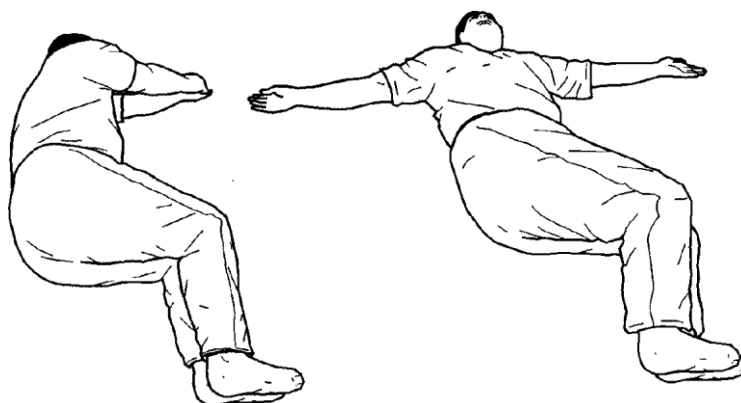
Lumbar Spine Stretches:

Lie on your back. Bring your knees towards your chest. Rotate your knees towards the pain.



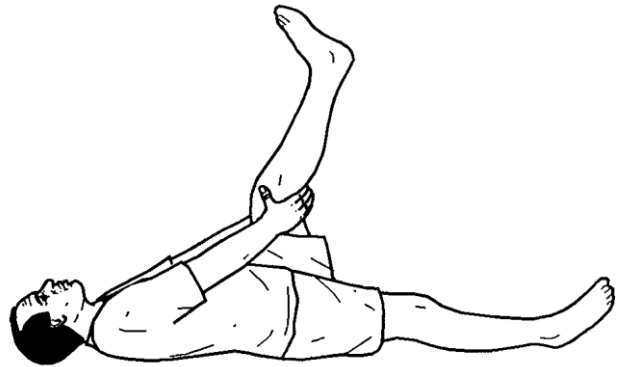
Side-lying Position:

Lie on your side and face forward. Have both arms straight in front and bend your knees. Turn your head as you move your top arm across your body as far as you can. Keep your arm in place and turn your head back to the starting position. Look back again and turn your head farther if you can. Bring your head and arm back to the starting position. Relax and repeat 10 times on each side.



Hamstring Stretch:

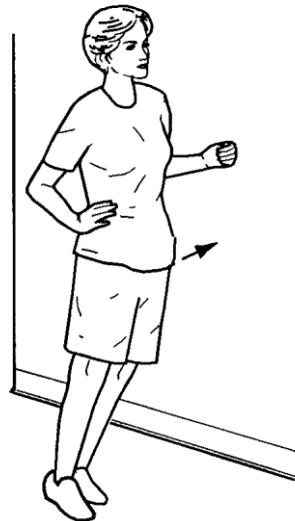
Lie on your back with your legs out straight. Raise your leg up and put your hands around the upper leg for support. Slowly straighten the raised knee until you feel a stretch in the back of the upper leg. Hold, then relax and repeat 10 times on each leg.

**Standing Arch:**

Stand with your feet apart and hands on the small of your back with fingers pointing backwards. Bend backwards at the waist, supporting the trunk with your hands. Keep your knees straight. Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 3 to 5 times.

**Side Glides:**

Stand at a right angle to the wall about 2 feet out from the wall. Lean your shoulder into the wall. Move your hips toward the wall, keeping your legs together and your knees straight. Return to the starting position.



Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at **614-293-3707** or e-mail **health-info@osu.edu**.