

BACK PAIN

Staying active is the most important thing you can do to recover from back pain. Try to carry on with your daily activities, as resting too much could cause the pain to get worse. This sheet includes some exercises you can do to reduce your back pain, and they'll also help improve the strength and flexibility of your back.

Your back pain should start to ease after two weeks, and will usually pass after four to six weeks. You may not need to see anyone, but if the pain doesn't get better in a few weeks, or if you have severe pain while doing the exercises below, make an appointment with your GP or physiotherapist. You can also speak to a pharmacist.

Get advice from a healthcare professional if you:

- have problems with your bladder or bowel – the organs which control pee and poo
- numbness
- have pins and needles
- feel generally unwell.

If doing exercises at home by yourself doesn't help your symptoms, physiotherapy could be a good option, as you can get advice and exercises that are more tailored to you. It's a good idea to carry on exercising once your back pain has got better, as this can reduce the chances of it coming back. Swimming, walking, yoga and Pilates are helpful exercises for your back. Try to pick an exercise you enjoy doing, as this will help you stick to it.

Exercises

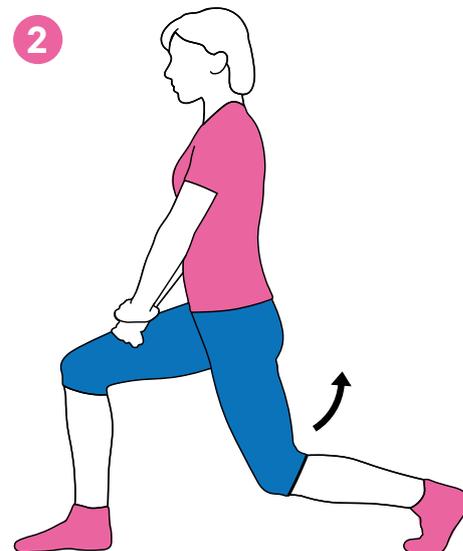
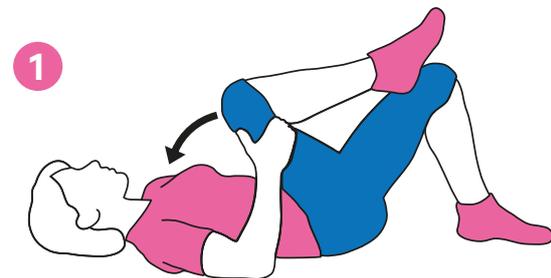
Many people find the following exercises helpful. If you need to, adjust the position so that it's comfortable. Try to do these exercises regularly. Do each one a few times to start with, to get used to them, and gradually increase how much you do.

1. Knees to chest

Lie on your back, with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor or bed. Bring one knee up and use your hands to pull it gently towards your chest. Hold the leg in position for five seconds, and then relax. Repeat this exercise with the other knee. Do the exercise five times on each side.

2. Deep lunge

Kneel on your right knee. Put your left leg in front of you, with your left foot on the floor. Facing forwards, lift your back knee up. Hold for five seconds. Repeat three times, then swap legs.



3. Half push-ups

Lie on your front, with your forearms flat on the bed or floor, and your elbows bent at your sides. Look down and keep your neck straight. Slowly push down on your hands and arch your back up, keeping your hips on the floor or bed. You should feel a stretch in your tummy muscles. Hold this for 5 to 10 seconds, then go back to the starting position. Gradually build up so that you're able to repeat this exercise 10 times. If you struggle to fully straighten your arms, start by arching your back halfway and resting on your elbows.

4. Knee rolls

Lie on your back, with your knees bent and your feet together. Roll your knees to one side, keeping your shoulders flat on the bed or floor, and hold for 10 seconds. Roll your knees back to the starting position, and then over to the other side and repeat. Do this exercise three times on each side.

5. Arching and hollowing

Get onto your hands and knees, making sure your hands are under your shoulders and your knees are under your hips. Arch your back upwards and let your head drop down. Hold this position for five seconds. Go back to the starting position, and then slowly lift your head up while relaxing your tummy and sticking your bottom out. Hold this position for five seconds, then repeat the move five times.

