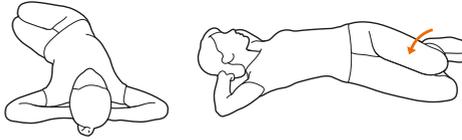


# Exercises for back pain

**This handy tear-off section contains exercises that are designed to stretch, strengthen and stabilise the structures that support your back.**

## Stretching exercises

1



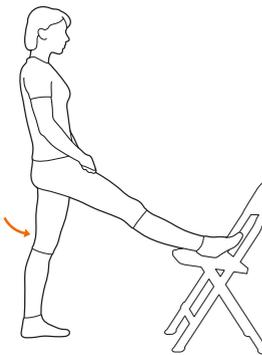
**Back stretch (stretches back muscles)** Lie on your back, hands above your head. Bend your knees and, keeping your feet on the floor, roll your knees to one side, slowly. Stay on one side for 10 seconds. Repeat three times each side. Note: Upper knee should be directly above lower knee.

2



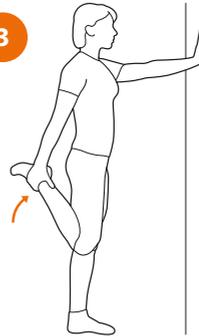
**Deep lunge (stretches muscles in front of thigh and abdomen)** Kneel on one knee, the other foot in front. Lift your back knee up making sure you keep looking forwards. Hold for five seconds and repeat three times each side.

4



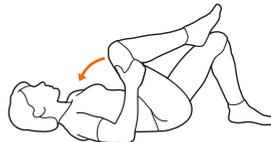
**One-leg stand – back (stretches hamstrings)** Steady yourself, then put one leg up on a chair. Keeping your raised leg straight, bend the supporting knee forward to stretch your hamstrings. Repeat three times each side. Please note: For those with acute sciatica this hamstring stretch may also pull on the sciatic nerve, making it feel worse. If in doubt, ask a physiotherapist if this exercise is suitable for you.

3



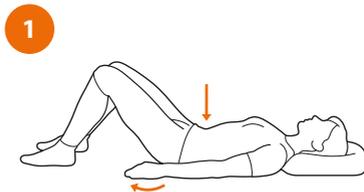
**One-leg stand – front (stretches front thigh)** Steady yourself with one hand on a wall or work surface for support. Bend one leg up behind you. Hold your foot for 10 seconds and repeat three times each side.

5



**Knee to chest (stretches muscles of bottom – gluteals)** Lie on your back. Bring one knee up and pull it gently into your chest for five seconds. Repeat for up to five times each side.

## Strength and stabilising exercises



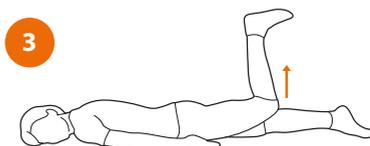
### **Pelvic tilt (works the deep muscles around the pelvis)**

Lie down with your knees bent. Tighten your stomach muscles, flattening your back against the floor. Hold for five seconds. Repeat five times.



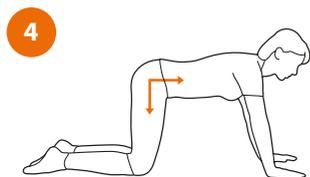
### **Stomach tone (works the transverse tummy muscles)**

Lie on your front with your arms by your side, head on one side. Pull in your stomach muscles, centred around your belly button. Hold for five seconds. Repeat three times. Build up to 10 seconds and repeat during the day, while walking or standing. Keep breathing during this exercise!

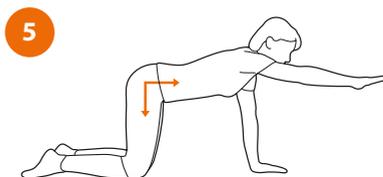


### **Buttock tone (works the gluteals)**

Lie on your front and bend one leg up behind you. Lift your bent knee just off the floor. Hold for up to eight seconds. Repeat five times each side.



**Deep stomach muscle tone (stabilises lower back)** Kneel on all fours with a small curve in your lower back. Let your stomach relax completely. Pull the lower part of your stomach upwards so that you lift your back (without arching it) away from the floor. Hold for 10 seconds. Keep breathing! Repeat 10 times.



**Back stabiliser** Kneel on all fours with your back straight. Tighten your stomach. Keeping your back in this position, raise one arm in front of you and hold for 10 seconds. Try to keep your pelvis level and don't rotate your body. Repeat 10 times each side. To progress, try lifting one leg behind you instead of your arm.

# Keeping active with back pain

It's important to keep active – research shows that bed rest for more than a couple of days can actually make your back pain worse. As well as the simple exercises in this pull-out, you should choose a form of exercise you enjoy and stick at it. Swimming, walking, yoga and Pilates are all great options if you have back pain.

Remember to keep exercising regularly, even after your back pain has cleared up!

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