

Being Active When You Have LOW BACK PAIN

Prescription for Improving Healthy Body Status

Exercising with low back pain is as easy as 1, 2, 3

Getting Started

Keep it Simple: Sit less and move more. You don't have to do big things. ANY physical activity is good. Walk to get your mail. Dance in the kitchen. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. All small things add up.

Did you know that one of the best ways to help your lower back pain is to avoid too much rest. Regular activity can help control more types of lower back pain.



1 Get Aerobic Activity

What

Any continuous activity (biking, walking, dancing)

When

3-5 days/week

How Hard

Start very light and continue to work up as your back pain allows. The overall goal should be for you to talk while exercising, but not sing.

On a scale of 1-10 you should aim to move between a 2-6.

1=short walk to get the mail
2-6= walking around the block, dancing in the kitchen
10=hard running

How Long

When you first start out, only exercise for a few minutes at a time. You can walk around your house, walk outside, whatever is comfortable for your back pain. Aim for 3 minutes of exercise at a time.

As you exercise more increase your time by 3 minutes.

Example:

Week 1: Walk around your block at a level 2

Week 2: Walk around your block at level 3 and then add another 3 minutes of walking.

Week 3: Walk around your block at level 4 and add another 6 minutes of walking.

Keep this going for the next 2-3 months. Eventually you want to work up to 30 minutes of exercise at a time.

PERCEIVED EXERTION CHART

| | |
|-----|---|
| 10 | Very, Very Hard Activity Completely out of breath, unable to talk |
| 9 | Very Hard activity Can speak only one word at a time |
| 7-8 | Hard Activity Out of breath, can speak a sentence or two |
| 4-6 | Moderate Activity Can talk but not sing |
| 2-3 | Light Activity Breathing is easy, can talk and sing |
| 1 | No Activity |

CAUTIONS: Listen to your body. Don't try to do too much too soon. If your back hurts when you walk, stop for the day, but don't stop exercising all together. Rest, take your prescribed medications and try a different activity the next day. If walking hurts your back, you can try water exercise or biking. Find an activity that doesn't cause your back to hurt.



2 Get Strong

What

Start by using your own body weight. Do each of the following:

Sit & Stands: Sit in a steady chair – using a kitchen chair is ideal and then stand up.

Calf Raises: Stand with your feet flat on the floor and shoulder-width apart. Raise yourself onto your toes and then lower your heels back to the floor. If you need to, stand near a countertop and hold onto it for extra balance.

Knee Lifts: In a standing position raise one knee. Lower your foot flat to the floor and raise the other knee.

Do each of these exercises 10 times.

Rest 1 minute in between exercises if you need.

Example: 10 sit and stands, rest 1 minute, 10 calf raises, rest 1 minute, 10 knee lifts, rest 1 minute.

When : How Hard

2-3 days/week.

Rest at least one day in between

Start slowly. On a scale of 1-10 you should be working at 4-8.

1=sitting on the couch

4=just able to feel your muscles being used

8=sweating during the exercise

10=can't do the exercise

How Long

10 repetitions to start. Build up as you can.

Special Considerations: Always be aware of how your back feels when you are strength training. As you get stronger, and your back hurts less, you can add hand weights and resistance bands.

Performing these exercises, including the suggested frequency, intensity and duration will help you meet the American College of Sports Medicine Guidelines for exercise participation and improve your health and fitness.

Local Resources

Free: Footprints for Fitness (Saginaw Center Courts), Walk with a Doc (YMCA)

Paid: Scan QR code for additional resources



3 Get Stretching

What

Stretching is a great way to make your back stronger. You should stretch before and after every exercise session.

Do each of the following:

Arm Circles:



Toe Touches:



Waist Twists:



Knees to Chests:



Lay flat on your bed or the floor (whichever is more comfortable for your back), bend both legs at the knees. Take one leg and hug it towards your chest.

Hold that stretch for a few seconds. Release and repeat with the other leg. Release and repeat with both knees at the same time.

Cat Cows:



Kneel on the floor and put your hands on the floor in front of you. Keep your hands shoulder-width apart and your knees directly below your hips. Inhale

deeply while curving your lower back and bringing your head up, tilting your pelvis up like a "cow." Exhale deeply and bring your abdomen in, arching your spine and bringing your head and pelvis down like a "cat."

When

You should stretch before and after every exercise session.

How Hard : How Long

Stretch as far as you can until you feel muscle tightness.

Don't overstretch, this could hurt your muscles. If you can't quite touch your toes, aim for your calf or your knees.

Do 5-10 of each stretch before and after every exercise session.

Stretch before you walk and after your walk is done. Stretch before you do your knee lifts, sit to stands and calf raises, and stretch when you are done.

Special Considerations: Coping with low back pain can be hard. Here are a few tips that might help reduce your low back pain:

Try to limit sitting to 15 minutes. Get up and stretch to avoid stiffness. A firm lumbar support can help reduce back pain while driving. When you are standing try to adjust the height of your work surface to waist level. When you must squat or kneel, be sure bend your legs and keep your back straight.