

Exercises for low back pain

Exercise is one of the best ways to manage most back pain and help prevent further attacks. Ask your GP about local exercise referral schemes, or try exercises from the list below.

- **Pilates** – strengthens muscles and spine and promotes good posture. See the video at: <http://bit.ly/2nr1JDD>
- **Alexander technique** can help long-term back pain. More detail at: <http://bit.ly/2AtGd3J>
- **Swimming** – takes the strain off joints and muscles while working out the entire body.
- **Yoga** – strengthens core and back muscles and increases flexibility.
- **Exercise programmes** – provide a cardiovascular workout and all over body conditioning including the back and core muscles.
- **Visit nhs.uk** for exercises to help stretch, strengthen and mobilise the lower back. <http://bit.ly/2zY1h2h>
- **Exercise at home** – see previous page for helpful exercises to try at home.

Back pain guide

Explore this guide for information on different types of back pain, how to prevent it, and advice on exercises and treatment. <http://bit.ly/2rvXicD>

This information is available in an easy read version and can be made available in large print. It may be available in alternative languages upon request. Please contact us on **020 3350 4205** (Monday – Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm) or email media@nw.london.nhs.uk to request an alternative version.

This leaflet has been issued by NHS North West London Collaboration

of CCGs covering the boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington & Chelsea, and Westminster.

The low back pain policy can be found at: www.hounslowccg.nhs.uk/media/98709/Low-Back-Pain-and-Sciatica_Policy-v41.pdf

www.healthiernorthwestlondon.nhs.uk
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Low back pain

Information for patients



Low back pain

Pain in the lower back is very common. Sometimes the pain can last a long time or keep coming back, but there are things you can do to help relieve it.

Things you can do

- Stay as active as possible – resting for long periods can make the pain worse. See suggested exercises on the opposite page and back of this leaflet.
- Use hot or cold compression packs from your pharmacy for short-term relief. Alternatively, a hot water bottle or a bag of frozen vegetables wrapped in a cloth will work just as well.
- Ask your GP about physiotherapy and psychological therapies. These can help people with low back pain.
- Take anti-inflammatory painkillers, such as ibuprofen. If you are not sure that the medicine is safe for you to take, ask a pharmacist.
- Talk to your GP or pharmacist about other medications which may help and ask your pharmacist or GP to consider a medication review to maximise effectiveness and avoid unnecessary side effects.

Treatments not recommended for low back pain

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) advises that some spinal injections and acupuncture do not justify the risks and costs involved and should not be offered to manage low back pain. Your GP will therefore not routinely be sending patients for:

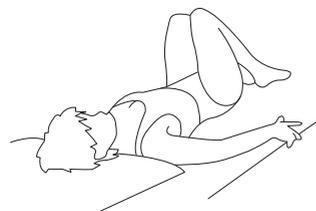
- Some spinal injections.
- Acupuncture.

When to get immediate medical advice

- If you are very unwell.
- If you think you may have: infection, cancer or a broken bone in your back.
- If you have: numbness or tingling around your genitals or buttocks, difficulty peeing, loss of bladder or bowel control.

Exercises to try at home

1

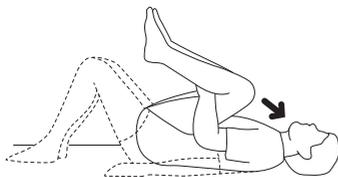


Lying on your back with knees together and bent.

Slowly roll your knees from side to side keeping your upper trunk still.

Repeat 15 times

2



Lying with your knees bent and feet on the floor.

Place your hands behind both knees and draw them towards your chest. Hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat 15 times

3

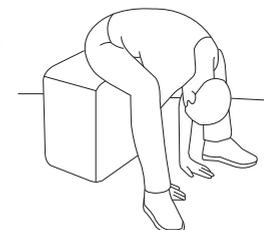


Stand straight with feet apart.

Support your back with your hands while bending back. Keep your knees straight during the exercise.

Repeat 15 times

4

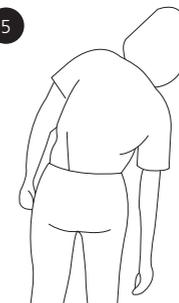


Sit on a chair with your legs apart.

Bend your head and trunk down between your knees rounding your upper body as much as possible and return to starting position.

Repeat 10 times.

5

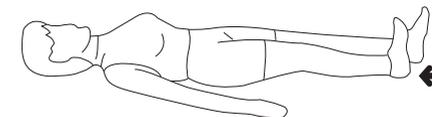


Standing.

Bend sideways at the waist.

Repeat 15 times

6



Lying on your back.

Pull one leg up at the hip to shorten the leg. Repeat with the other leg.

Repeat 10 times

- You can try these exercises at home. See the next page for more suggested exercises.
- Stretch gently. Stop any exercise causing tingling or severe pain.
- Start again gently, but if the exercises still cause pain, seek advice.