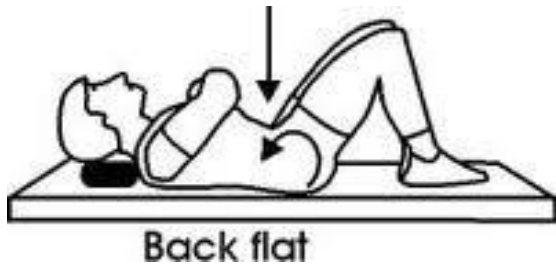


# Back Strengthening Exercises



- One of the more popular injuries that can occur is a back injury. Overuse, improper form, or not having a strong enough back and core can cause back injuries.
- Doing daily back exercises can significantly reduce chronic back pain, but must be done effectively. Different back pains can benefit from different exercises, so check with your doctor about which exercises to perform.
- The following slides include exercises that focus on strengthening your back to help you avoid any injuries.
- **Note: Lower back strengthening exercises should not be done to fatigue. Great benefits can be achieved without high intensity. Keep movements slow and controlled to avoid injury!**



# Pelvic Tilt



- How to do it:
  - Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor, and arms at your side.
  - Push the base of your spine towards the floor while pulling in your stomach.
  - Tighten the hip and thigh muscles to pull the pubic bone forward slightly.
  - Hold this position for 5-10 seconds and then relax. Repeat 10-20 times.
- Why it helps:
  - The pelvic tilt helps to realign the body by extending the spine and pulling in the abs.
  - The pelvic tilt provides a good starting point for spinal stabilization. They are often recommended for developing support of the low back and core muscles.



# Hip Bridge



- **How to do it:**
  - Lie flat on your back and bend your knees, keeping your feet flat on the floor. Lay your arms on the floor beside you.
  - Tighten your abs and slowly raise your buttocks off the floor, keeping your tailbone tucked.
  - Your body from your shoulders to your knees should be in a straight line.
  - Hold this position for a 5 count and then lower. Repeat this for 5 to 10 repetitions.
- **Why it helps:**
  - This move counteracts the effects of too much chair time, which puts excessive pressure on the spine.
  - Stretches the hip flexors.
  - It strengthens the muscles that stabilize the spine, including those of the lower back, the gluteals, and the stabilizing abdominal muscles.



# Bird Dog



- How to do it:
  - Kneel on the floor (on all fours) with your hands also on the floor about shoulder width apart.
  - Slowly raise one arm, make sure you have your balance while performing this exercise. Lower this arm regain your balance and then slowly raise the opposite arm.
  - Once you have mastered this you can add raising the opposite leg off the floor along with raising your arm. Reach forward with your arm and backward with your foot as you raise them until they are about in line with your back.
  - Hold this position for 5-10 seconds and then slowly lower back to all fours.
  - Repeat with the opposite arm and leg for 10 repetitions each side.
  - This exercise can also be performed lying face down on the ground to achieve similar results.
- Why it helps:
  - Improves muscle balance and coordination. This will make it easier to keep the spine stable for everyday moves.
  - It will lead to tighter abs which will keep the spine supported.



# Plank



- **How to do it:**
  - To perform this exercise lie face down.
  - Move up to where you are resting on your knees and elbows.
  - Make sure you keep your body in a straight line while you hold this position for 10 seconds.
  - Perform this exercise for 5 to 10 repetitions.
  - Something you can focus on while performing this exercise is holding your stomach in.
  - To increase the difficulty of this exercise you can move from your knees to your feet.
- **Why it helps:**
  - The Plank not only works your low back but your hips and abs as well.
  - This will strengthen your core which will help stabilize your spine and lower back.



# Side Plank



- **How to do it:**

- This exercise is very similar to the plank, but performed on your side.
- Start by lying on your side and bending at your knees.
- Slowly move up onto your elbow so only your bottom knee and elbow are in contact with the ground.
- Hold this position for 5 to 10 breaths and then switch to the other side.
- Perform this exercise 3-5 times on each side.
- This can also be increased in difficulty by moving from your knees to your feet.

- **Why it helps:**

- This exercise will build strength and endurance in the core that will help keep your lower back protected and stable during activities that require movement in the hips or back.



# Wall Sit (Wall Squat)



- **How to do it:**
  - Start with your back up against a wall and your feet about 18 inches away from the wall.
  - Slowly slide down the wall until your knees are at a 90 degree angle.
  - Make sure your knees are not past your toes, if they are you may need to move your feet farther away from the wall.
  - Hold this position for 10 seconds and then slide back up the wall. Perform this exercise 10 times.
  - If lowering to 90 degrees is too difficult, start at 45 degrees and work your way up to the 90 degree position.
- **Why it helps:**
  - The wall sit exercise strengthens your back, trunk, and thigh muscles, helping you maintain a healthy lower back.





# Reverse Crunch



- How to do it:
  - Lie on your back with your arms at your sides.
  - Bring your knees up towards your chest until they are at a 90 degree angle and your feet are off the floor. You will want to either cross your feet or have them together.
  - Contract your abs and bring your hips off the floor, as you curl your knees towards your chest.
  - Lower your hips back to the floor and repeat for 15 repetitions.
  - Try to avoid swinging your legs and using them as momentum.
- Why it helps:
  - The reverse crunch will strengthen your lower abs. This will help take some pressure off of your lower back that may occur from stabilizing your body.



# Knee to Chest



- **How to do it:**
  - This exercise is used to stretch the muscles in of the low back. If it starts to get painful do not continue to perform this exercise.
  - To perform this exercise start by lying on your back on a mat.
  - Bring one of your knees up towards your chest.
  - Without pulling the knee towards you hold the knee in place with both hands.
  - Keep your low back in contact with the mat throughout the exercise.
  - Hold this stretch for 30 seconds and repeat on the left side.
- **Why it helps:**
  - This exercise will release tension in the back as well as gently stretch the hamstrings.

# Supine Spinal Twist



- How to do it:
  - Lying on your back, draw your right knee into your chest, keeping your left leg extended on the ground.
  - Drop your right knee over to the left side of your body.
  - Turn your head so you are looking over your right shoulder. Focus on trying to keep your right shoulder on the ground.
  - Hold this position for 5 to 10 breaths before returning to the starting position. Repeat this for 5 to 10 reps and then switch to your left leg.
- Why it helps:
  - This exercise works on stretching the glutes, as well as stretching and relaxing the spine.