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EXERCISES AT HOME

The following exercises have been specifically selected to assist with your recovery and help minimize future problems.

CHOOSE ONE OF 3 SIMPLE WAYS TO VIEW VIDEO DEMONSTRATIONS OF YOUR EXERCISES

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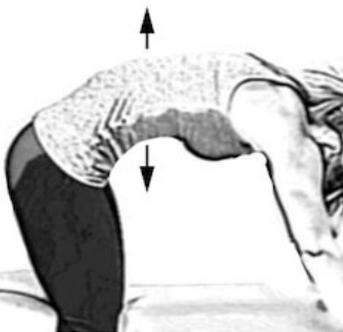
Phase I

Cat/Camel

Begin on all 4's, keeping your back in neutral position. Keep your hands under your shoulders and your knees under your hips. Extend your neck and back at the same time into a "Mad Cat" position. Next, flex your neck and back at the same time to drop into an, "Old Horse" position. Repeat in a slow coordinated movement for 20 repetitions. Perform 3 sets of 20 repetitions twice per day, or as directed.

Sciatic Floss Supine

Lie flat on your back with your uninvolved knee bent. Slowly extend your straightened involved leg to raise it off of the floor and stop when you feel a stretch in the back of your leg. Slowly bring your toes towards your shin to increase the stretch. Do not move into a position that reproduces any sharp or radiating pain. At the same time that you are raising your leg, extend your head to look at the wall behind you (as to nod "yes.") Lower your leg and return your head to the start position at the same time. Perform two sets of 10 repetitions twice per day or as directed.



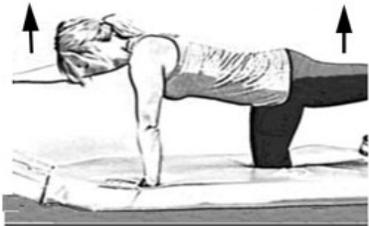
Sidebridge

Begin lying on your side. Rest your weight on your forearm and feet. Lift your hips forward and toward the ceiling until your body is in a straight “plank” position. Initially, you may need to use your knees for support. Slowly lower your hips back to the floor and repeat for three sets of 10 repetitions per day on each side, or as directed.



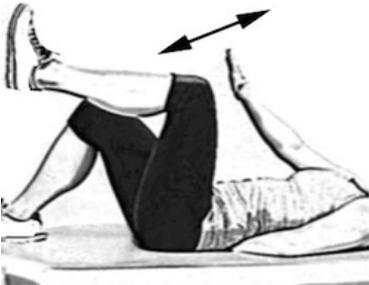
Bird Dog

Begin on your hands and knees in a quadruped position. Extend your right leg and left arm into a fully straightened “bird dog” position. Hold this contraction for two seconds and return to the quadruped position. Do not arch your back or twist your hips at any point. Repeat with your opposite limbs, slowly alternating for three complete sets of 10 repetitions two times per day or as directed.



Dead Bug

Begin lying on your back with your right arm reaching overhead and your left leg flat on the table. Your right knee should be bent 90 degrees and your hip 45 degrees. Place your left wrist beneath your back to prevent your back from flattening against the ground. Slowly begin by raising your left knee and right arm at the same time until your hand touches your knee. Be sure not to lift your head or allow your spine to flatten against the floor. Return to the start position and repeat for three sets of 10 repetitions on each side, twice per day or as directed.



2 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOURSELF



Sleep Posture

Your mattress and the position you sleep in may affect your condition.

- ✓ Choose a mattress that provides medium or firm support, such as a traditional coil spring or adjustable airbed. Avoid waterbeds, thick pillow tops and soft, sagging mattresses.
- ✓ Always sleep on your back with a pillow either underneath your knees or on your side with a pillow between your knees. Avoid sleeping on your stomach.
- ✓ Keep your neck and back covered while sleeping to avoid drafts that could cause potential muscle spasms.



In & Out of Bed

Here are a couple of tips to help you get in and out of bed more comfortably:

- ✓ To lie down: Sit on the edge of the bed, pull your arms to your sides and tilt your body into the bed,

maintaining the bend of your knees at 45 degrees. Finally, bring your feet into in a lying position or roll onto your back.

✓ To get up: From a side-lying position with your knees bent, push your body upright into a sitting position, swinging your legs over the edge of the bed as you rise.



Workstation Ergonomics

Ergonomics is the science of adjusting your workstation to minimize strain in the following ways:

- ✓ Maintain proper body position and alignment while sitting at your desk - Hips, knees and elbows at 90 degrees, shoulders relaxed, feet flat on floor or footrest.
- ✓ Wrists should not be bent while at the keyboard. Forearms and wrists should not be leaning on a hard edge.
- ✓ Use audio equipment that keeps you from bending your neck (i.e., Bluetooth, speakerphones, headsets).
- ✓ Monitors should be visible without leaning or straining and the top line of type should be 15 degrees below eye level.
- ✓ Use a lumbar roll for lower back support.
- ✓ Avoid sitting on anything that would create an imbalance or uneven pressure (like your wallet).
- ✓ Take a 10-second break every 20 minutes: Micro activities include: standing, walking, or moving your head in a “plus sign” fashion.
- ✓ Periodically, perform the “Brugger relief position” -Position your body at the chair’s edge, feet pointed outward. Weight should be on your legs and your abdomen should be relaxed. Tilt your pelvis forward, lift your sternum, arch your back, drop your arms, and roll out your palms while squeezing your shoulders together. Take a few deep cleansing breaths.



Lifting Mechanics

Here are some tips to help you lift safely:

- ✓ Avoid lifting or flexing before you’ve had the chance to warm up your muscles (especially when you first awaken or after sitting or stooping for a period of time).
- ✓ To lift, stand close directly facing object with your feet shoulder width apart.
- ✓ Squat down by bending with your knees, not your back. Imagine a fluorescent light tube strapped to your head and hips when bending. Don’t “break” the tube with improper movements. Tuck your chin to help keep your spine aligned.
- ✓ Slowly lift by thrusting your hips forward while straightening your legs.
- ✓ Keep the object close to your body, within your “powerzone” between your hips and chest. Do not twist your body, if you must turn while carrying an object, reposition your feet, not your torso.

An alternative lifting technique for smaller objects is the golfers lift. Swing one leg directly behind you. Keep your back straight while your body leans forward. Placing one hand on your thigh or a sturdy object may help.



Lumbar Support Cushion

Sitting without proper support is a common contributor to back pain, so make sure you:

- ✓ Sit all the way back in chairs and car seats to promote proper posture.
- ✓ Adjust the lumbar support in your car to fit your back.
- ✓ Consider a “lumbar support pillow” to make sitting more comfortable.



Entering & Exiting a Vehicle

Entering and exiting your vehicle is a potential risky activity for low back pain sufferers. Follow these tips to limit problems:

- ✓ To enter the vehicle, open the door and stand with your back to the seat, legs close to the side of the vehicle. For larger vehicles, you may wish to begin by standing on the running board. Place your hands on the door and door frame to keep your movements slow and controlled then slowly lower your body into the vehicle.
- ✓ Tuck your head into the vehicle. Keep your knees close to each other, as though they have been taped together, brace your abdomen as though you are about to be punched in the stomach and pivot your body as a whole without twisting or bending at the waist. You may grasp the steering wheel with your right hand to help you pivot.
- ✓ Use a lumbar roll or other support to help maintain good posture. Position the roll slightly above your belt to support the “small of your back”. Adjust your seat so that your knees are slightly lower than your hips. Try to avoid prolonged car rides- take frequent breaks.
- ✓ Before exiting, create adequate space by pushing your vehicle seat back as far as possible and move the

steering wheel up and out of the way. To exit, first scoot slightly to the door side edge of your seat, then keep your knees together and pivot with the same cautions that you used to enter the vehicle. When your feet are shoulder width apart and firmly on the ground or running board, grasp the door and door frame, lean forward, but be sure not to bend your back, as you tighten your abdominal muscles. Slowly thrust your hips forward to stand up.



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