

Back Pain Information Hand-Out

PARKSIDE GROUP PRACTICE

Around 80% of the population will at one time or another suffer from lower back pain. Pain can range from severe to mild and be long-lasting or short-lived. Regardless of how the pain happens, lower back pain makes it quite difficult to maintain everyday activities like you once did. One of the more common causes of lower back pain is a disc herniation, sometimes known as a “slipped disc” or “disc prolapse”.

The spine is composed of a number of small bones, referred to as vertebrae, which are all stacked one on top of the other. Ligaments, nerves, muscles and discs are all additional components of the spine.

Each vertebra connects to create a canal that shields and protects the spinal cord. It is composed of three distinct sections creating natural curves in your back: chest area (thoracic), curves of the neck area (cervical) and lower back (lumbar). The lower part of the spine is composed of vertebrae fused together (sacrum and coccyx). Every spine should have natural curves in it, the backward curve in your lower back is known as lordosis. Your upper back curves forwards and this is known as a kyphosis, and in your neck the curve is backwards and again known as lordosis.

Back Exercises

Lie flat on your back, and bend both knees with your feet flat on the ground or bed. Gently drop your knees to one side to create a rotation through your spine. Perform 5-10 repetitions each side, and do this twice per day.



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Another exercise is the chair rotation exercise. Sit down on a comfortable chair with good posture. Rotate your spine and reach by touching the back corner of the chair. This will help mobility in your spine and reduce stiffness. Perform 10 repetitions each side, up to five times per day.

A good core strengthening exercise is the four point kneeling exercise. Go onto all fours on your bed, and simply contract your deep abdominal muscles by drawing your belly button upwards towards your spine. Its important to keep the natural curves in your spine as the photo shows. Hold the contraction for 10 seconds, and relax. Repeat 5-10 times. This exercise will strengthen your deep abdominal muscles, helping to support your spine. To make the exercise harder, simply lift one knee or one hand a couple of inches from the floor.



Tips:

1. Avoid repetitive forward bending.



2. Maintaining a healthy weight will help to alleviate some of the stress placed onto the lower back.
3. Good posture is crucial to avoid any future problems with the back.
4. Eliminating nicotine and smoking will help prevent increased aging of the spine.
5. Combine aerobic exercise to help make sure the muscles in the abdomen and back are flexible and strong.
6. Avoid sitting for long periods of time – get up and move around every 20-30 minutes.
7. If you need to bend down to pick up a heavy weight, bend your knees as far as possible to minimise strain on your lower back.