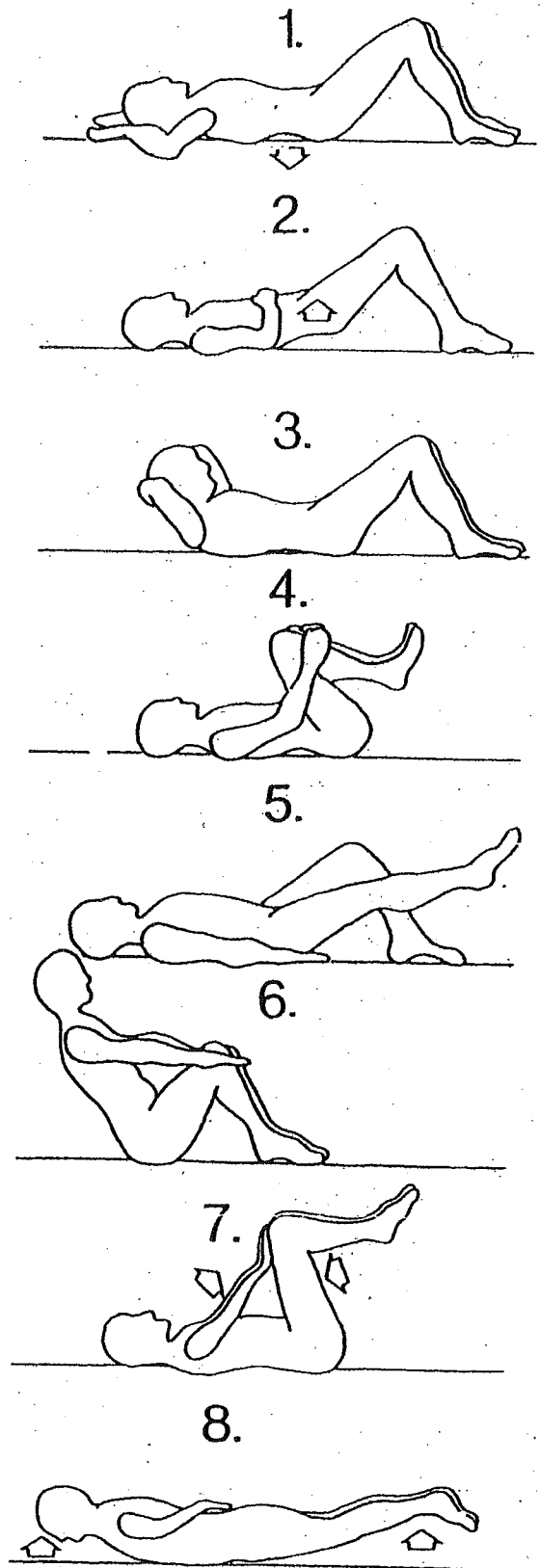


Basic Low Back Exercises



Any exercise should be started by trying the movements slowly and carefully. Do not overdo exercising. Do only the exercises that your doctor has recommended and in the order that he advises.

The exercises should be done on a firm, padded surface, such as a carpeted floor. If it is difficult getting down and up from the floor initially, a firm bed might be preferred. A small pillow under the head is sometimes more comfortable.

Start the exercises slowly and gently. Allow the muscles to loosen up. Mild heat or a hot tub soak for five to ten minutes just before starting can help relax tight muscles. Follow your doctor's instructions; it will be well worth the effort.

1. The basic starting position for all the exercises is lying on your back with the knees bent and the back flat against the floor. Tighten the muscles of the abdomen and buttocks at the same time to force and firmly flatten your back against the floor. Hold for 6 seconds. Relax for 12 seconds. Repeat 5-10 times.
2. Assume the basic starting position. Raise the hips off the floor about 6 inches and tighten the muscles of the hips and buttocks. Hold for 6 seconds. Relax for 12 seconds. Repeat 5-10 times.
3. Assume the basic starting position with hands behind the head. Raise your head off the floor while forcefully contracting the abdominal muscles. A loud grunt of "AAHH" is helpful in doing this exercise to prevent internal pressure. Hold for 6 seconds. Relax for 12 seconds. Repeat 5-10 times.
4. Assume the basic starting position. Bring both knees to the chest, grabbing your knees with your hands and pulling your knees toward your chest as close as possible. Hold for 6 seconds. Relax for 12 seconds. Repeat 5-10 times.
5. Assume the basic starting position. Extend one leg straight out. Raise the straight leg about 6 inches off the floor and hold for 6 seconds. Return to the starting position with both knees bent. Repeat the movement with the opposite leg. Hold for 6 seconds. Relax for 12 seconds. Repeat 5-10 times.
6. This exercise should not be done until the other exercises have been done for several weeks. Assume the basic starting position. Pull up to a sitting position, being certain to keep the knees bent. It is helpful to put the feet under a heavy chair or sofa for support, or have someone hold the feet to the floor. Hold for 6 seconds. Relax for 12 seconds. Repeat 5-10 times.
7. Lower Abdominal Exercises. Lie on back with your hands against your thighs. Place a small pillow under the small of your back. Raise your legs so that your thighs will be perpendicular to the floor as illustrated in the drawing. Push against thighs with hands while at the same time resisting with thighs. Do this for approximately 6 seconds. Relax for 12 seconds. Repeat 5-10 times.
8. Low Back Extension Exercise. Lie on your stomach. Place your hands in the small of your back. Slowly raise your head and chest from the floor while at the same time raising the legs from the floor 2" to 6". Hold for 6 seconds. Relax for 12 seconds. Repeat 5-10 times.

SUGGESTED EXERCISE FOR SENIOR SOFTBALL PLAYER
(Before and After)

These exercises are designed to increase muscle flexibility and joint mobility. They are to be done slowly and smoothly, being sure to hold at the maximum point in the range of movement for the time indicated.

Count out loud (thousand one, thousand two, etc.) to prevent holding your breath.

DO NOT USE ANY BOUNCING OR JERKING MOVEMENTS!

Never stretch beyond the point of pain-- only a moderate discomfort should occur as tightness reduces and range of motion increases with each stretch.

Before stretching be sure to "warm up" by running in place, jogging or doing jumping-jacks for 1-2 minutes.

Repeat any exercise if you still feel significant tightness in the muscles being stretched after one hold.

Allow at least 15 minutes for the entire session

(Compiled and written by Michael Beauvais, P. T.)

