

# Back



## Physiotherapy Exercise



Common causes of low back pain include joint and intervertebral disc degeneration, lack of exercise, poor posture, and obesity, etc. Regular practice of back exercises, along with proper joint care, can help to alleviate and prevent back pain, as well as slow down the degenerative process, enhance the flexibility, muscle strength, and posture of the low back.



Department of Health



Elderly Health Service

## Points To Note For Back Exercise



1

If you have a recent injury, fracture, or serious osteoporosis, history of orthopedic surgery (especially with hip replacement or spinal surgery), chronic and severe low back pain, you should consult a doctor or physiotherapist before exercising.

2

The bed should provide adequate space. Exercise on a mattress and pillow with suitable thickness and firmness, aiming at maintaining the normal curvature of the spine.

3

Wear comfortable and well-fitted clothing.



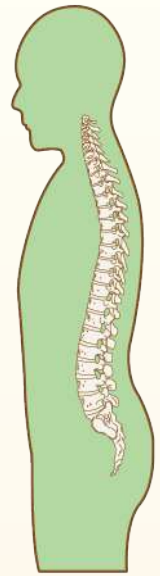
4

Perform the exercise according to your capability and progress gradually. The exercises should not cause any pain or discomfort. You should adjust the exercise frequency or intensity according to the instructions of healthcare professionals.

5

Stop immediately if you feel any discomfort or difficulty during exercise and seek medical advice if the condition is serious, persists, or worsens.

# Tips To Prevent Low Back Pain



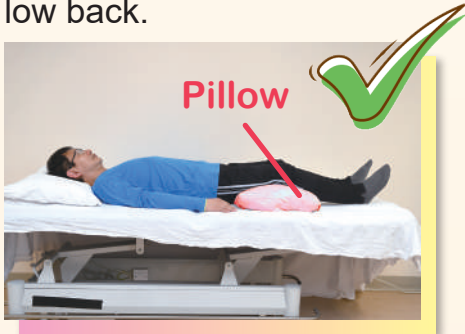
## 1

## Maintain Proper Posture

The spine forms two “S” shapes from the neck to the bottom when viewed from the side. It is important to maintain this normal curvature so as to keep the balance among spinal muscles, thereby reducing muscle soreness caused by poor posture.

### Lying position

Select a mattress and pillow with suitable thickness and firmness to maintain the normal curvature of the spine. You can place a towel roll underneath your low back or a pillow under your knees when lying on your back. When lying on your side, you can place a pillow between your legs or place one foot in front of the other with a pillow supporting the front leg. These can help relaxing the low back.



## Sitting Position

Maintain an upright posture with your back against the backrest of the chair. Sit with your hips and knees at a 90-degree angle, and your feet flat on the floor. A cushion can be used to maintain the curve of the low back.



## Standing Position

Stand with eyes looking straight forward. Keep your chin tucked in, shoulders relaxed, back straight and abdomen tightened. Distribute weight evenly on both feet.



## 2. Take Your Time Getting Up

While getting out of bed, first turn to your side, then place your feet down at the edge of the bed. Next, use your hands to push your body up.

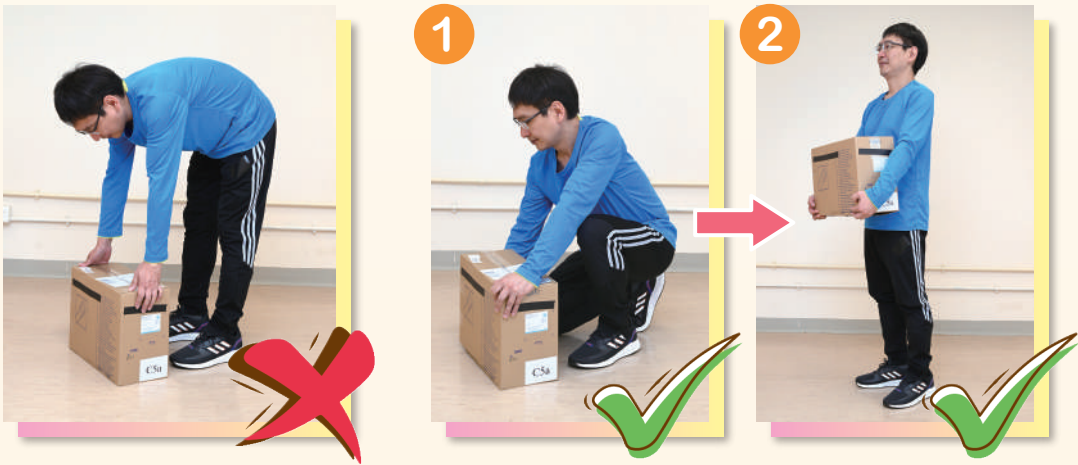


### 3. Change Your Posture Regularly

Avoid maintaining the same posture for long time, e.g. you may sit for a while after standing for about 30 minutes; stand up and stretch your back after sitting for about 30 minutes. Alternatively, change your posture early to prevent discomfort before it occurs, thereby reducing muscles soreness in the low back.

### 4. Lift Properly

When lifting heavy objects, don't exceed your capability; maintain a straight back with your abdomen tightened, stand with feet apart and knees bent, keep the object as close to your body as possible, and lift with the strength of lower limbs.



### 5. Avoid Carrying Heavy Loads

Consider using a shopping cart or seeking assistance.

### 6. Maintain A Healthy Weight

This helps to reduce the burden on the spine and joints caused by obesity.





# Physiotherapy Exercise

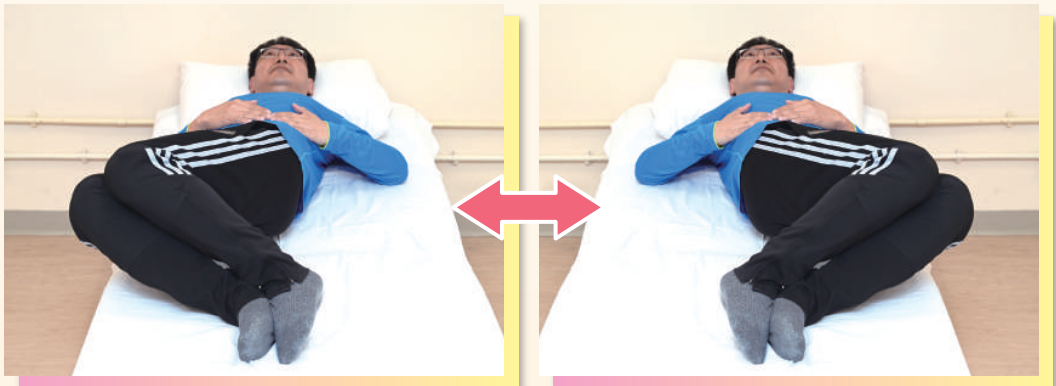
## Joint Mobility Exercise

1-3 sets daily,  
10 repetitions per set

### Trunk Rotation

Aim: To maintain back mobility

- 1 Lie on your back, bend both knees with knees touching each other, place your feet flat on the bed and both hands on your tummy.
- 2 Relax your low back, move your legs to the right and hold for 5 seconds.
- 3 Return to the starting position, repeat to your left side.



### Note:

Relax your low back and keep your shoulder touching on the bed. Move slowly.

## Stretching Exercise

Once a day,  
2-4 repetitions each time

### Knee to Chest

Aim: To improve flexibility of low back

1

Lie on your back, bend both knees and place your feet flat on the bed.

2

Hold right thigh with both hands and pull toward your chest.

3

Hold for 10-30 seconds once you feel a mild stretch in the low back.

4

Return to the starting position, repeat with your left side.



### Note:

Patients with knee pain should simply relax and bend their knees naturally, avoid pressing on the front of the lower leg to prevent exacerbating the pain.

## Strengthening Exercise

2-3 days a week  
(suggest to perform on alternate days)  
10 repetitions a set, 1-3 sets a day

### Abdominal Bracing

Aim: To strengthen core muscles, increase stability of lumbar spine, improve posture and movement coordination

1

Lie on your back, bend both knees and place your feet flat on the bed.

2

Gently press the muscles on both sides of the navel with your fingertips.

3

Tighten your abdominal muscles and gently press your low back toward the bed until you feel the muscles firm under your fingers. Hold for 5 seconds, then relax.



### Note:

Do not hold your breath when tightening the abdominal muscles; maintain natural breathing.



## Strengthening Exercise

2-3 days a week  
(suggest to perform on alternate days)  
10 repetitions a set, 1-3 sets a day

### Curl-up

Aim: To strengthen abdominal muscles

1

Lie on your back, bend both knees and place your feet flat on the bed. Relax your hands and place them on your thighs.

2

Curl up your upper body and extend both hands toward your knees.

3

When you feel your abdominal muscles gently tighten, hold for 5 seconds, then slowly return to the starting position.



### Note:

This exercise is for strengthening the abdominal muscles, so do not pull by your neck to avoid neck pain. Do not hold your breath when exerting force; maintain natural breathing.

## Strengthening Exercise

2-3 days a week  
(suggest to perform on alternate days)  
10 repetitions a set, 1-3 sets a day

**Aim:** To strengthen muscles of the back, glutes and posterior thigh

### Bridging

- 1 Lie on your back, bend both knees, place your feet flat on the bed and both hands on the bed.
- 2 Raise your hips off the bed, try to keep your thighs and back in a straight line.
- 3 When you feel your muscles of the back, glutes and posterior thigh gently tighten, hold for 5 seconds, then slowly return to the starting position.



### Note:

Do not hold your breath when exerting force; maintain natural breathing. Relax your neck to avoid neck pain.

Please consult a physiotherapist or other healthcare professionals if you have any queries about this pamphlet.

Elderly Health Service, Department of Health

Website: [www.elderly.gov.hk](http://www.elderly.gov.hk)

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