



GET STRONG • BE STRONG • STAY STRONG  
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Patient name: .....

## BEGINNER EXERCISES FOR THE LOWER BACK

The following exercises are designed to give you immediate relief from lower back pain as well as reducing the risks of recurrent episodes if you perform them daily.

### THE NATURAL CURVE IN YOUR LOWER BACK



When standing everyone has a curve in their lower back that is unique. When you are recovering maintaining your natural curve during forward-bending activities can reduce the incidence and severity of lower back pain. This will give you the confidence to start moving again.

Did you know your brain contains maps of your body and that each and every one of your muscles is connected to your brain via nerve pathways?

Avoid slouching and rounding your lower back when bending to pick up objects:



Practise using the natural curve in your lower back instead:



It has recently been discovered that the nerve cell connections in your brain can change over time – this is called neuroplasticity.

Avoid slouching when sitting down and standing up:



Practise maintaining the natural curve in your lower back instead:



Long-term lower back pain can alter the maps related to spinal muscles as well as areas related to the perception of pain.

## CAT CAMEL

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### Step 1

On all fours, body in a square shape, elbows straight.



### Step 2

Slowly and smoothly round your back and lower your head.



### Step 3

Slowly and smoothly arch your back and look up. This is a mobilisation not a stretch – you should not feel any discomfort.



Repeat steps 2 and 3 ten times.

The good news is that due to neuroplasticity movement and exercise can improve the areas of your brain related to pain.

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## ALL FOURS LEG SLIDE

This is a coordination exercise that challenges the muscles that stabilise your spine.

### Step 1

On all fours, place a tennis ball in the small of your back so that you maintain a natural curve in your lower back.



### Step 2

Slowly slide your leg behind you until it is completely straight. Keep the rest of your body very still.



### Step 3

Raise your leg slightly.



### Step 4

Slowly return your leg to the step 1 position.

Repeat steps 1 to 4 five times on each side.

## BENT-LEGS SIDE BRIDGE

An endurance exercise for your side muscles.

### Step 1

Starting on your side with your weight on your elbow, hip and knee. Hips and knees should be slightly bent.



### Step 2

Lift your body up into the side bridge position and hold. Ensure your hips are straight and your head is in a neutral position. You should feel this exercise in the side of your back closest to the floor.



Hold for 15 seconds, four times.  
Progress to 30 seconds, twice  
and then one minute each side.

## SWISS BALL SQUATS

Improving leg strength will help you perform more challenging activities such as lifting.

### Step 1

Stand upright with the swiss ball in the small of your back. You can also use a bolster or rolled towel. Have your feet apart and slightly turned out.



When you learn new ways of moving you're not just changing your body – you're also changing your brain!

### Step 2

Slowly squat down maintaining the natural curve in your lower back. Stop at the point where your heels start to lift or when your legs are horizontal. Make sure your knees don't move inwards.



### Step 3

Slowly return to the step 1 position.

Repeat steps 2 to 3 ten times.

To challenge your balance you can try a single leg squat.