

THE FIT BACK WORKOUT

-
- **Stretching**
 - **Strengthening**
 - **Charting
Your
Progress**
-



A BACK THAT'S FIT FOR LIFE

Do you want to strengthen your back? Do you have back pain that needs to be controlled? Are you recovering from a back injury or surgery? A fit back workout can help. A healthcare professional can tailor an exercise program to your fitness needs. And the workout takes only minutes each day. Do it while you're watching TV at home, or even during a break at work. Take the time to keep your spine in line!

DOING THE WORKOUT

Stretching and strengthening exercises "train" your back to stay well-aligned and strong. They also train you to use your stomach, lower back, and leg muscles. Here are some things to keep in mind while you exercise:

- Breathe normally. Inhale as you start an exercise. Exhale during the stretch.
- Wear supportive athletic shoes during your workout.
- For certain exercises, keep a towel and a pillow handy.
- You may feel sensations you're not used to as you stretch your muscles. Your healthcare provider can tell you what to expect. If you feel pain during your workout, stop and call your healthcare provider.

CAUTION

These exercises are safe for most people. Your healthcare provider may add special instructions on each page.

Some exercises have more challenging variations. Ask your healthcare provider before trying these.

For each exercise, check this area for tips to help you exercise safely.

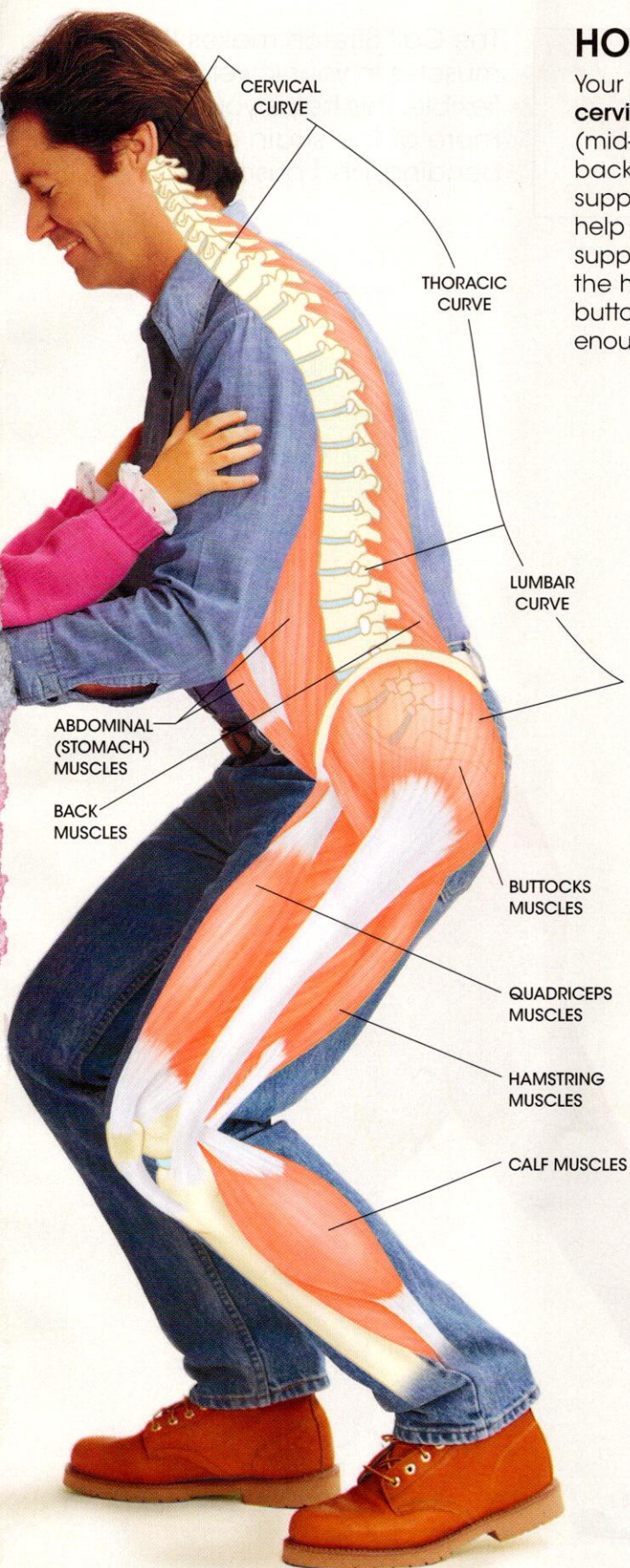


This booklet is not intended as a substitute for professional healthcare. See your doctor before undertaking any significant lifestyle change.

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HOW YOUR BACK WORKS

Your back has three natural curves: the **cervical curve** (neck), the **thoracic curve** (mid-back), and the **lumbar curve** (low-back). These stress-absorbing curves support your upper body's weight and help your joints work together. They also support the weight of loads you lift. With the help of muscles in your abdomen, buttocks, and legs, your back is flexible enough to let you stretch, twist, and bend.

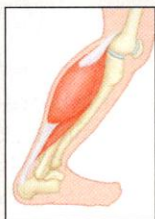


Keeping Your Spine in Line

Your spine's natural curves are positioned properly when your ears, shoulders, hips, and ankles line up. Here are some tips for maintaining your spine's natural curves:

- Keep your eyes facing forward.
- Keep your shoulders upright. Don't slouch.
- Pull your abdomen in when you stand upright.
- Bend with your hips, not with your waist.

CALF STRETCH



The Calf Stretch makes the calf muscles in your lower legs more flexible. This helps your legs bear more of the strain of walking, bending, and pushing.

HOW TO

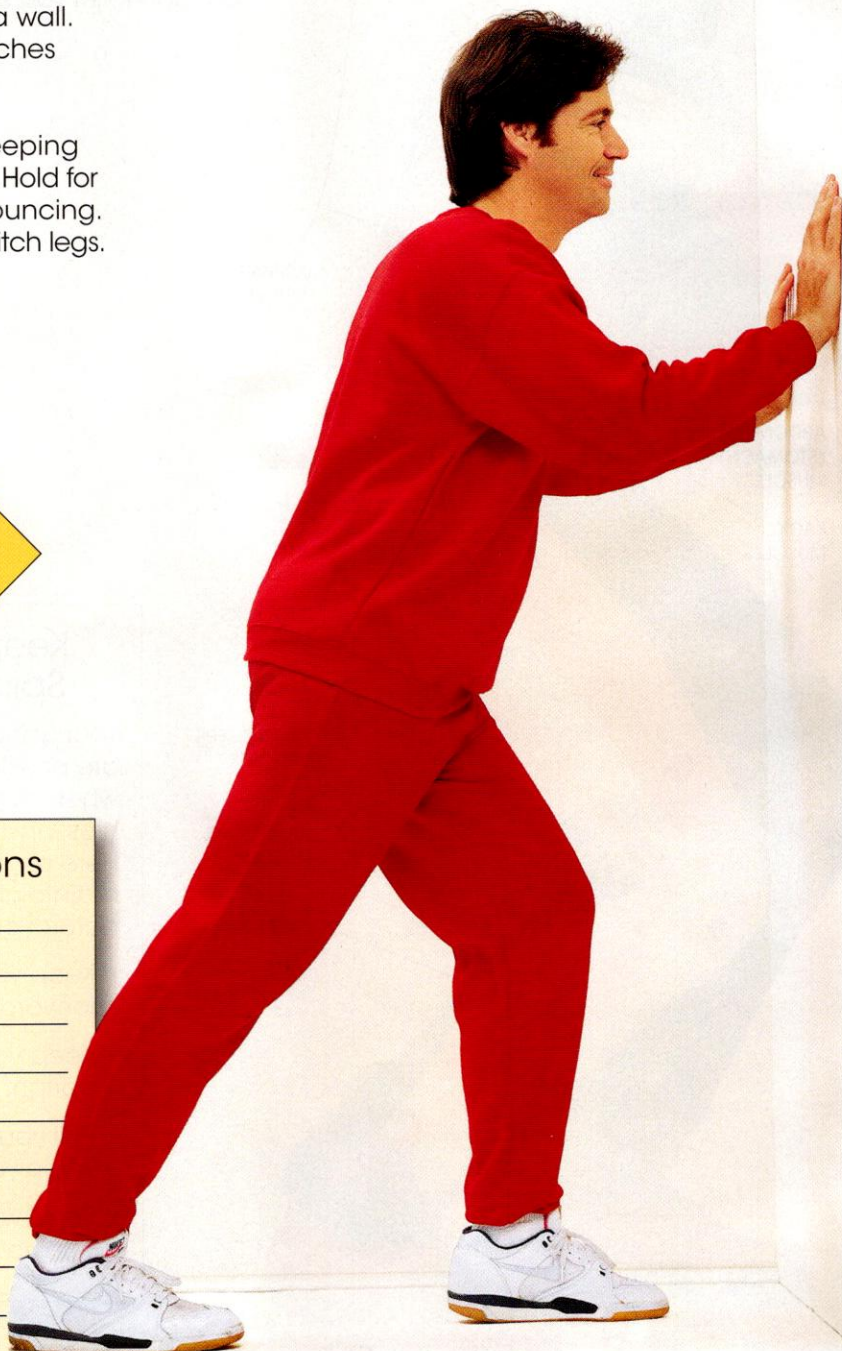
- 1 Position yourself with your arms braced against a wall. Put one foot several inches behind the other.
- 2 Bend your front leg, keeping both heels on the floor. Hold for 30 seconds without bouncing. Do this 3 times; then switch legs.

CAUTION

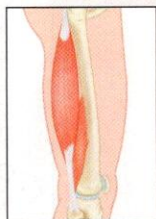
Keep your back heel on the floor and your back knee straight.

Maintain your spine's natural curves.

Special Instructions



HAMSTRING STRETCH



The Hamstring Stretch makes the hamstring muscles in the back of your thighs more flexible. This helps you stand, push, bend, and walk.

HOW TO

- 1 Lie on your back with your buttocks close to a doorjamb. Extend your legs along the floor, bending them slightly.
- 2 Raise one leg and rest your heel against the doorjamb. Straighten your raised knee by flattening it against the doorjamb. Feel the stretch in the back of your thigh. Hold for 30 seconds. Do this 3 times; then switch legs.

CAUTION

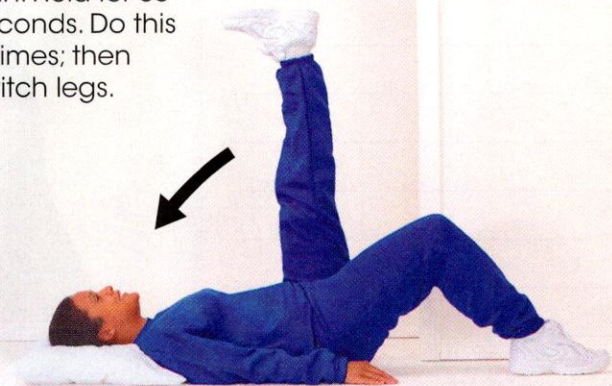
Use a pillow to keep your neck from arching back. Keep your supporting leg bent and your foot flat on the floor.



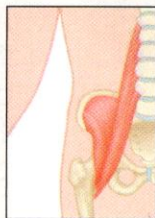
Special Instructions

Challenge Yourself

When your leg is straightened against the doorjamb, slowly pull it as close to your chest as you comfortably can. Hold for 30 seconds. Do this 3 times; then switch legs.



HIP FLEXOR STRETCH



The Hip Flexor Stretch lengthens the muscles that help keep your back and pelvis stable. This helps maintain your spine's natural curves as you climb uphill or walk up stairs.

HOW TO

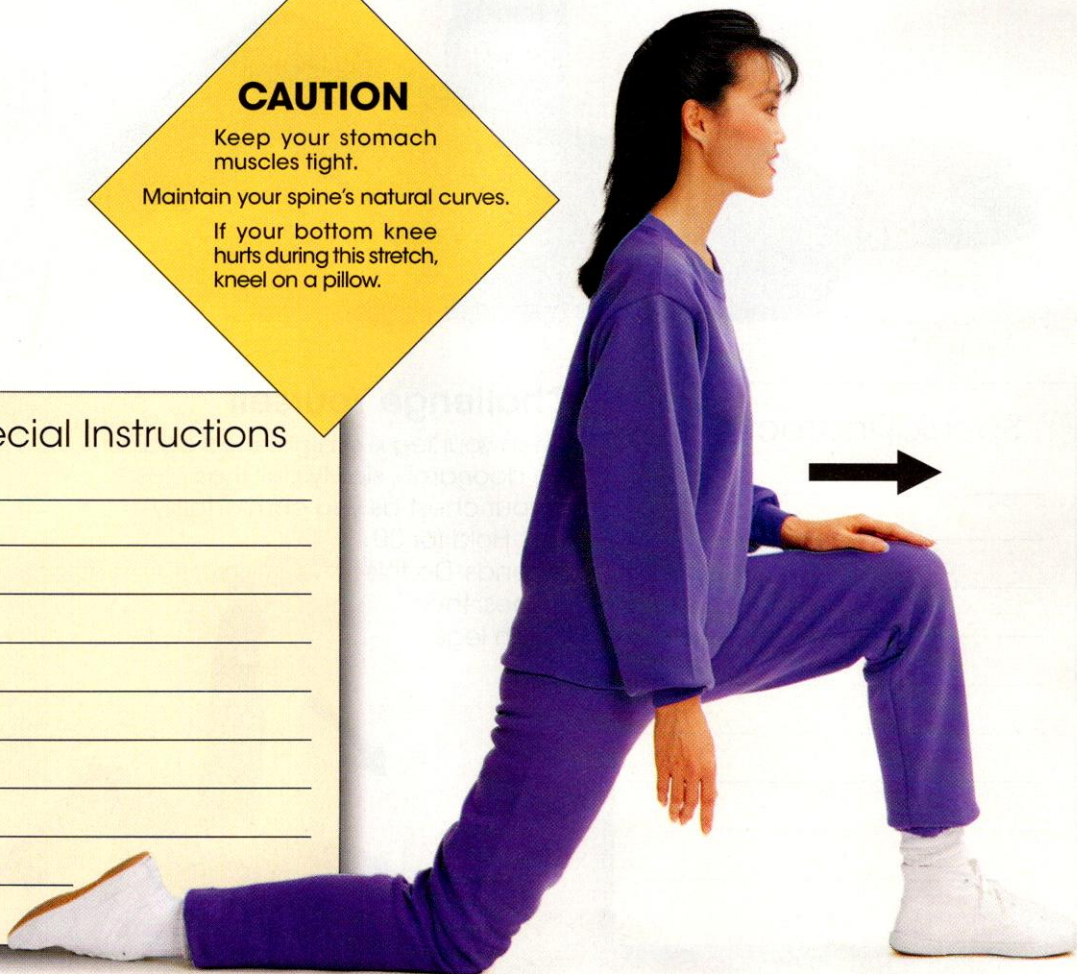
- 1 Kneel on the floor. Raise one knee and move that foot forward so your knee is slightly bent. If you have trouble balancing, hold on to a chair.
- 2 Tighten your stomach muscles. Move your hips and pelvis forward, keeping your back and shoulders upright. Feel the stretch in the front of your hip. Hold for 30 seconds. Do this 3 times; then switch legs.



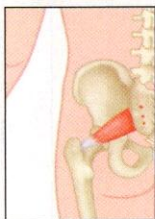
CAUTION

Keep your stomach muscles tight.
Maintain your spine's natural curves.
If your bottom knee hurts during this stretch, kneel on a pillow.

Special Instructions



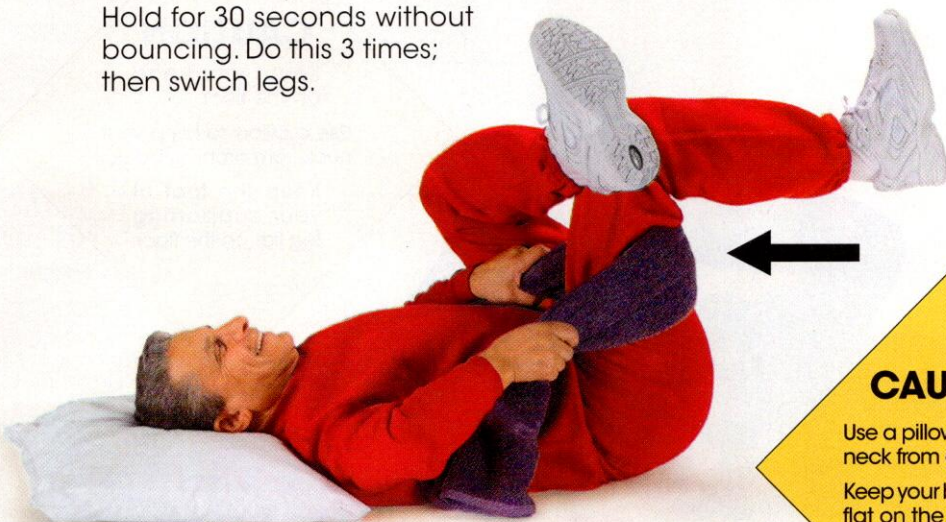
HIP ROTATOR STRETCH



The Hip Rotator Stretch lengthens the muscles around your hips. This makes it easier for you to squat down or cross your legs.

HOW TO

- 1 Lie on your back with your knees bent. Rest one foot on the opposite knee.
- 2 Place a towel behind your bottom thigh. Grasp both ends of the towel. Gently pull your knee toward your chest. Feel the stretch in your buttocks. Hold for 30 seconds without bouncing. Do this 3 times; then switch legs.



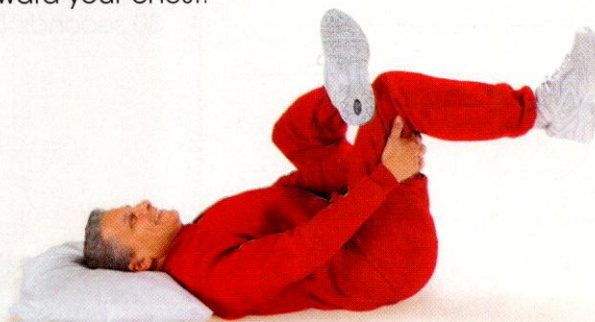
CAUTION

Use a pillow to keep your neck from arching back. Keep your back and hips flat on the floor.

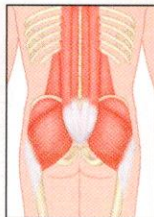
Special Instructions

Challenge Yourself

Instead of using the towel, grasp your bottom thigh behind the knee. Pull it gently toward your chest.



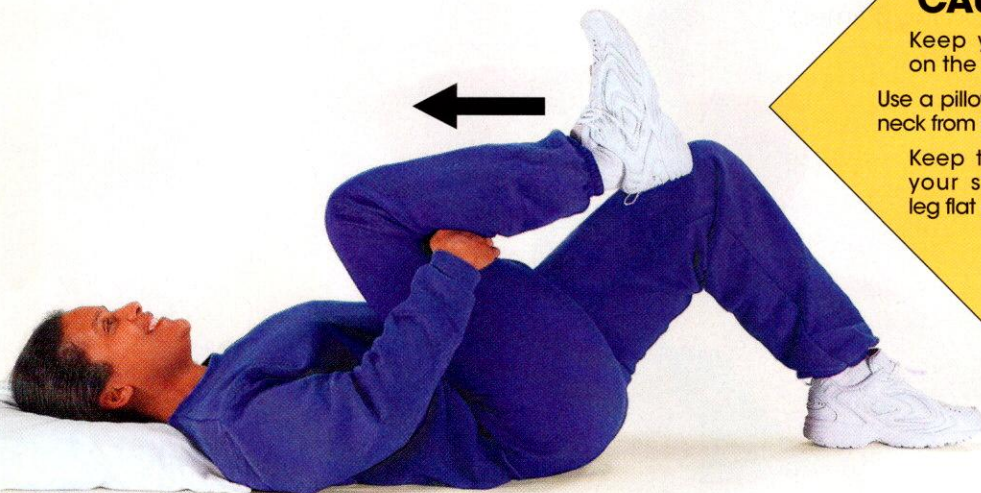
KNEE-TO-CHEST



The Knee-to-Chest exercise stretches the muscles in your back. This helps keep your lower back flexible and your spine in line.

HOW TO

- 1 Lie on your back with your knees bent. Keep your feet flat on the floor.
- 2 Grasp your thigh behind the knee and slowly pull it to your chest. Keep your other foot on the floor. Hold for 30 seconds. Do this 3 times; then switch legs.



CAUTION

Keep your head on the floor.

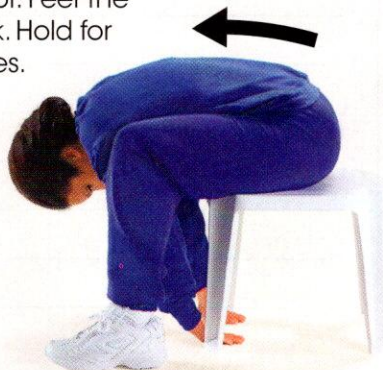
Use a pillow to keep your neck from arching back.

Keep the foot of your supporting leg flat on the floor.

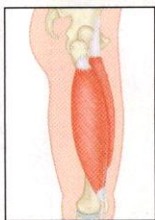
Special Instructions

Challenge Yourself

Sit forward on a chair with your knees and feet spread shoulder-width apart. With your arms between your legs, bend forward until the backs of your hands are flat on the floor. Feel the stretch in your lower back. Hold for 30 seconds. Do this 3 times.



QUADRICEPS STRETCH



The Quadriceps Stretch lengthens the quadriceps muscles in your thighs. This makes it easier for you to walk down stairs, rise from a chair, or lift heavy objects.

HOW TO

- 1 Position yourself an arm's length from a wall. Keep your eyes facing straight ahead.
- 2 Place one hand against the wall. With your other hand, grasp your ankle. Pull your lower leg straight back.
- 3 When you feel the stretch in your thigh, hold for 30 seconds without bouncing. Do this 3 times; then switch legs.



Special Instructions

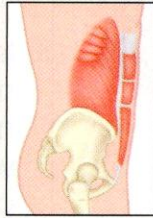
CAUTION

Maintain your spine's natural curves.

Face forward as you reach back for your leg.

Keep your knees together, with your bent knee pointing straight down.

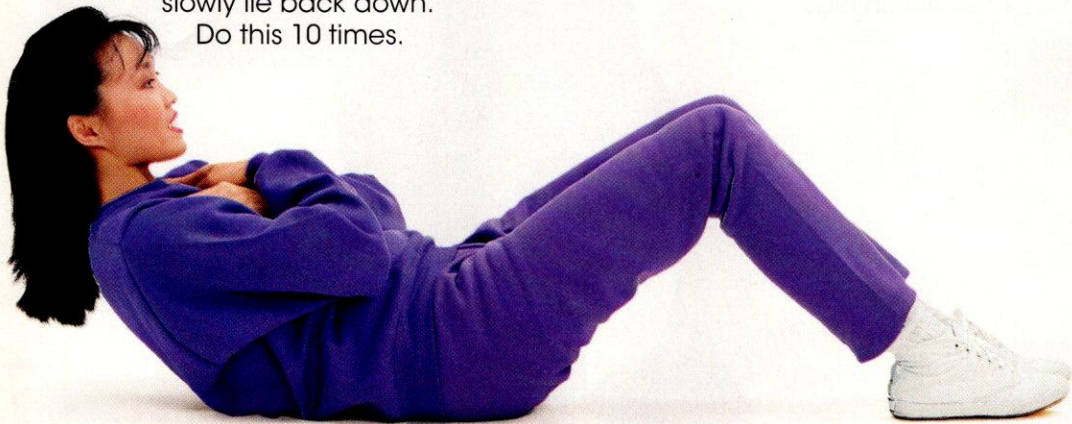
PARTIAL CURL-UP



The Partial Curl-up strengthens your abdominal muscles. Strong abdominal muscles help keep your back aligned and stable.

HOW TO

- 1 Lie on your back with both knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Cross your hands over your chest.
- 2 Looking at the ceiling, tighten your abdominal muscles. Slowly lift your head and shoulders until your shoulder blades are just off the floor. Hold for at least 5 seconds, breathing normally. Then slowly lie back down. Do this 10 times.



Special Instructions

CAUTION

Don't pull with your neck.
Keep your arms relaxed and your lower back flat on the floor.

If your lower back hurts, put a rolled towel under it to maintain your spine's natural curves.

THE BRIDGE



The Bridge strengthens your abdominal, buttocks, and hamstring muscles. This helps you keep your back stable and aligned while you walk.

HOW TO

- 1 Lie on the floor with your back and palms flat. Bend your knees. Keep your feet flat on the floor.
- 2 Contract your abdominal and buttocks muscles. Slowly lift your buttocks off the floor until there's a straight line from your knees to your shoulders. Hold for at least 5 seconds. Do this 10 times.



CAUTION

Use a pillow to keep your neck from arching back.

Raise your hips only high enough to straighten your lower back.



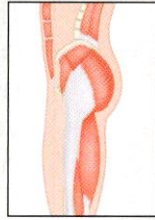
Special Instructions

Challenge Yourself

Do the Bridge with one foot raised several inches off the floor. Alternate legs. Make sure to keep your stomach muscles tight.



PRONE PRESS-UP



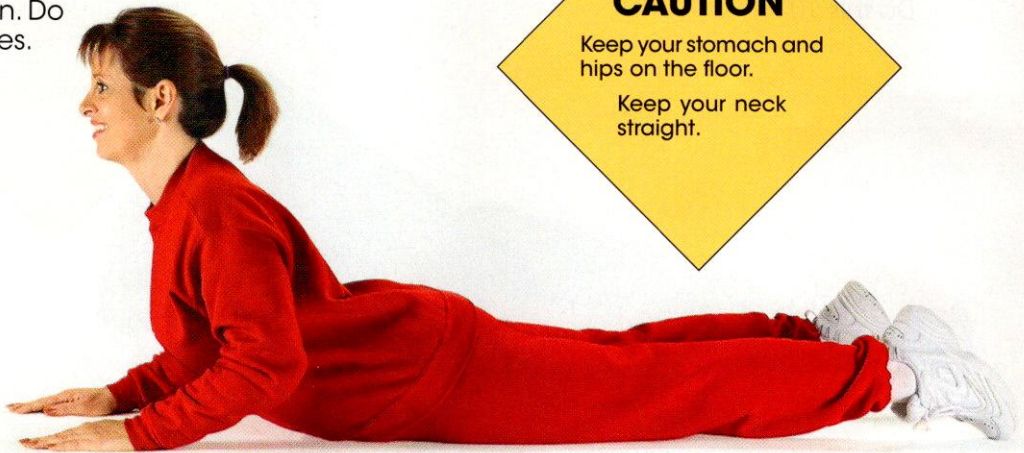
The Prone Press-up strengthens and stretches your lower back muscles. This helps maintain your lumbar curve.

HOW TO

1 Lie on your stomach with your feet slightly apart and your elbows bent. Look at the floor. Relax your stomach and back muscles.



2 Push yourself up on your forearms, slowly arching your back. Continue until your belly-button is just about to rise off the floor. Hold for 5 seconds, then lie back down. Do this 10 times.



CAUTION

Keep your stomach and hips on the floor.

Keep your neck straight.

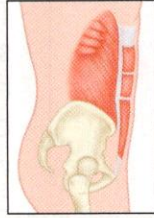
Special Instructions

Challenge Yourself

Lie on your stomach with a pillow under your pelvic area. Put your hands by your sides. Slowly raise your chest off the floor, placing your arms behind you. Hold for 30 seconds.



ABDOMINAL LIFT



The Abdominal Lift strengthens your lower abdominal muscles, helping you keep your pelvis and back stable.

HOW TO

- 1 Lie on the floor with both knees bent. Put your feet flat on the floor and your arms by your sides. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
- 2 Lift one bent knee and move it toward your upper body. Keep your abdominal muscles tight and your back flat on the floor. Hold for 10 seconds. Do this 3 times; then switch legs.



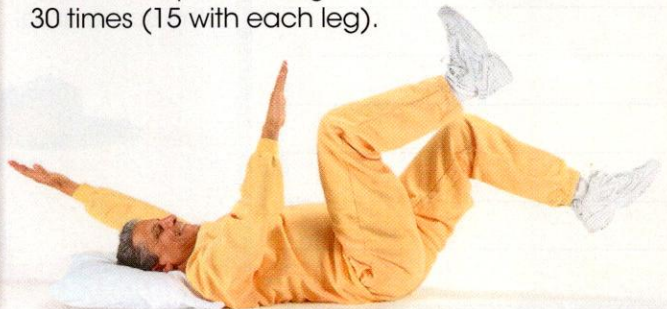
CAUTION

Use a pillow to keep your neck from arching back. Tighten your abdominal muscles to keep your back flat on the floor.

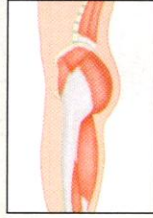
Special Instructions

Challenge Yourself

Lie with both knees bent and your arms stretched behind your head. Lift one knee and then the other, moving them back and forth in a bicycling motion. As you lift each knee toward you, raise the arm on the same side and touch your hand to your knee. Begin with just the bicycling motion, then work up to adding the arm motion. Do this 30 times (15 with each leg).



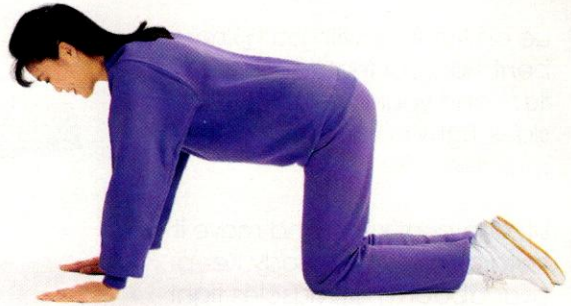
LEG REACH



The Leg Reach strengthens the small muscles in your back and hips. This trains you to keep your back in line while standing, walking, and going about your daily activities.

HOW TO

- 1 Get on your hands and knees. Keep your knees directly under your hips and your hands directly under your shoulders.
- 2 Keeping your hips level and your abdominal muscles tight, extend one leg straight out behind you until it's parallel with the floor. Hold for at least 5 seconds. Do this 10 times; then switch legs.



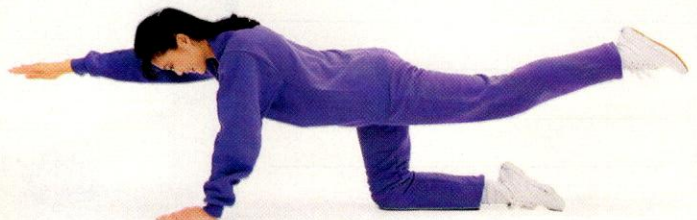
CAUTION

Keep your toes slightly pointed.
Keep your eyes facing down.
If your bottom knee hurts during this stretch, kneel on a pillow.

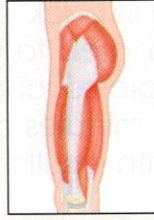
Special Instructions

Challenge Yourself

Extend opposing arms and legs at the same time.



WALL SLIDE



The Wall Slide strengthens your quadriceps, hamstring, and buttocks muscles. It also trains you to use your leg muscles instead of straining your back when you bend or lift heavy objects.

HOW TO

- 1 Stand with your back against a smooth wall. Put your feet at least a foot away from the wall and slightly apart. If you need to, place a rolled towel behind your lower back to help maintain your spine's natural curves. Relax your shoulders.
- 2 Slowly slide straight down until you're halfway between standing and sitting positions. Hold for at least 10 seconds, then slowly slide back up. Do this 5 times.



CAUTION

Look straight ahead.
Don't lower your buttocks below your knees.
Breathe normally.

Special Instructions

CHART YOUR PROGRESS

Check the upper half of the box each day you do a morning workout. Check the lower half of the box if you exercise in the evening. And congratulate yourself for your good work!

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Consultants:

Stan A. Conte, PT
Bill Mattmiller, PT
James Reynolds, MD,
Orthopaedic Surgery
Sande Rutstein, BS, OTR
Marci Stevenson, MS, PT,
Orthopaedic Sports Medicine

The key to a fit back is your own personal workout program, tailored to your individual needs by a healthcare professional. In return for your investment of just a few minutes of exercise each day, you'll be rewarded with results that may last a lifetime.

		S	M	T	W	T	F	S
WK 1	AM							
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WK 8	AM							
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Talk to your healthcare provider about adding low-impact aerobic exercises, such as swimming or bicycling, to your Fit Back Workout.								