



Spine Care

STABILIZATION EXERCISES

Abdominal Bracing While Lying on the Back:

- Breathe normally
- Draw your belly button in towards spine by squeezing the same deep muscles as if you had to stop the flow of urine
- Maintain that for 10 seconds
- You should be able to feel your upper belly remain soft
- You maybe be able to feel lower your belly become gradually firm
- Remember not to hold your breath
- Relax

Alternate Arm:

- Tighten deep stomach muscles
- Maintain normal breathing
- Find and maintain neutral spine
- Alternately lift one arm at a time, do not let the back arch
- Maintain deep stomach muscles tightened throughout the exercise

Tiny Steps:

- Tighten deep stomach muscles
- Find and maintain neutral spine
- Breathe normally
- Lift one foot from the floor, but no more than 12 inches
- Smoothly alternate with other foot, making sure one heel is on the floor at a time

Dead Bug:

- Tighten deep stomach muscles
- Maintain normal breathing
- Find and maintain neutral spine
- One at a time, lift both feet off of the floor
- Alternately raise and lower one arm and opposite leg while maintaining neutral spine
- At the end of the set, return one foot at a time to the floor

Partial Crunches:

- Support the back of your neck with a towel
- Tighten deep lower stomach muscles
- Find and maintain neutral spine
- Curl your chest up until your shoulder blades raise off the floor
- Try to prevent bending your neck so that your chin doesn't move towards your chest
- Make sure you breathe normally throughout the exercise

Diagonal Crunches:

- Support the back of your neck with one hand
- Opposite elbow on the floor
- Tighten your deep stomach muscles
- Find and maintain neutral spine
- Alternately elevate one shoulder blade off the floor at a time
- Breathe normally throughout the exercise

Bridging:

- Tighten your deep stomach muscles
- Find and maintain neutral spine
- Smoothly move your hips off of the floor
- Maintain for 5 to 10 seconds
- Smoothly lower your hips back to the floor
- Make sure you are breathing normally
- Maintain a neutral spine
- Make sure your movements are smooth

Bridging with Leg Extension:

- Tighten your deep stomach muscles
- Find and maintain neutral spine
- Smoothly lift your hips off of the floor
- While maintaining the bridge position, straighten one leg and hold for 5 seconds
- Repeat with opposite leg before lowering your hips to the floor
- Maintain normal breathing, maintain neutral spine and make sure all the moves are smooth

Deep Abdominal Bracing in Quadruped:

- Breathe normally
- Then draw your belly button in towards spine by squeezing the same deep muscles as if you had to stop the flow of urine
- Remember not to hold your breath

Quadruped

- On hands and knees
- Hands should be about shoulders width apart
- Palms can be flat down or on your fists, whichever is most comfortable
- Tighten the deep stomach muscles
- Find and maintain neutral spine
- Then slowly and smoothly raise one arm leading with the thumb, alternate with the opposite arm
- Breathe normally throughout the exercise
- Maintain a neutral spine
- Keep the deep stomach muscles tighten

Quadruped Alternate Arm and Legs Raises:

- On all fours
- Tighten the deep stomach muscles
- Find and maintain neutral spine
- Slowly and smoothly raise one arm and the opposite leg alternate with opposite side
- Your back should remain level throughout the exercise
- Keep the deep stomach muscles tightened and maintain the neutral spine

Mini-Squat In Standing in Front of Chair:

- First tighten the deep stomach muscles
- Find and maintain neutral spine
- Maintain neutral as you lower your hips towards the chair
- Place your arms in front of you to help maintain balance

Mini-Squats Against a Wall:

- Lean against the wall with feet about one foot apart and about one foot away from the wall
- Tighten the deep stomach muscles
- Find neutral spine
- Slide down the wall stopping shy of a 90 degree bend in the knees
- Hold this position for about 10 seconds

STRETCHING FOR FLEXIBILITY

Single Knee to Chest Stretch:

- First tighten the deep stomach muscles
- Pull the knees towards the chest until you feel comfortable stretch to the low back and/or buttock area
- Maintain the stretch for about 30 seconds
- Sometimes it's easier to use a towel in which case you can wrap it around behind the knee and then pull the knee towards the chest

Cross-legged Gluteal Stretch:

- Tighten deep stomach muscles
- Then cross ankle over opposite knee
- Use the opposite hand to pull the knee towards the opposite shoulder
- You should feel a comfortable stretch across the hip and/or lower back
- Maintain the stretch for about 30 seconds

Hamstring Stretching for Flexibility (lying down):

- There are several different ways to stretch your hamstrings muscles
- These muscles are located on the back of your thigh and they control motion around your knee and your hip
- They also play a very large role in how your lower back moves
- First, lie on your back with both knees bent
- Then, loop a belt, towel, a sheet, or even cane around your foot

- While maintaining your knee straight, gently raise your leg upwards, until you feel a good pull on the back of your thigh
- Hold this upwards for about 30 seconds before switching sides
- Make sure you maintain those deep stomach muscles during this exercise especially while lowering the leg

Abdominal Bracing While Standing:

- Breathe normally
- Tighten the deep stomach muscles by squeezing the same deep muscles as if you had to stop the flow of urine
- Find neutral

Quadriceps Stretch in Standing:

- Standing beside the chair, first tighten the deep abdominal muscles
- Find neutral spine
- Bend knee by pulling up on the foot
- Again try and maintain neutral spine
- And try and keep the thigh vertical, hold the stretch approximately 30 seconds
- Make sure this does not cause low back pain

Quadriceps Stretch on Side of the Bed or Side of Couch (Using a Strap):

- First place the loop around the foot
- Lie down on the side of the bed or side of the couch
- Place a pillow or two under your belly
- Drop one foot down onto the floor, with the knee bent
- Pull the other foot upwards towards the buttock with the belt
- Making sure this doesn't create low back pain
- Try to maintain this position for 30 seconds

Calf Stretch:

- Find and maintain neutral spine
- Place your hands against the wall
- Place one leg forward and one leg back
- The back knee should be straight
- Ease the back heel towards the floor until you feel a comfortable stretch on the back side of the leg
- Hold the stretch for approximately 30 seconds

Trunk Stretch:

- First tighten the deep stomach muscles
- Bring your arms out to the side
- Slowly lower the knees to the side
- After holding the stretch for approximately 30 seconds, slowly lower the knees to the opposite side

Pelvic Tilts:

- First position yourself on your back with the knees bent
- Tighten your deep stomach muscles
- Rock your hips back and forth so that your back alternates between an arched and a rounded position
- Try to maintain your deep stomach muscles tightened throughout this exercise
- Repeat this motion for about 30 seconds

Trunk Rotations:

- First tighten the deep stomach muscles
- Place the arms out to your side
- Maintain those deep stomach muscles tightened and let your knees rock side to side
- Remember to try and keep those deep stomach muscles tightened throughout the exercise

Leg Pumping:

- Place both hands behind the knee
- Pull upwards towards your chest
- Smoothly straighten and bend your knee and ankle
- Repeat this motion for about 30 seconds

POSITIONS TO HELP EASE PAIN

Pain Easing Exercise in Standing Between Two Arms Supports:

- Bend the knees trying to take the majority of your weight through your arms and off of your legs
- Try to maintain this for 10 to 20 seconds

Pain Easing Exercise Over a Table, the Backside of a Couch, or Over a Counter:

- You lean forward over the surface of the table
- Take the majority of your weight through your arms
- Let your knees bend but keep the toes on the ground
- Maintain for approximately 10 to 20 seconds

Pain Easing Exercise Over the Door Traction:

- Place the towel or a sheet over the top of the door
- Grab each side with your hands
- Position your body close to the door
- Slowly bend your knees and take the majority of your body weight with your hands and off of your feet
- But don't lift your feet off the ground
- Try to maintain for 10 to 20 seconds

Pain Easing Exercise While on your Back:

- Bend up the knees
- Place your hands on the uppermost portion of your thighs, thumbs on the inside, fingers on the outside
- Relax your trunk

- Head should be resting comfortably on a pillow
- Push downwards towards your feet with your hands
- Maintain for 10 to 20 seconds

Pain Easing Exercise in Sitting:

- Using a chair with an armrest, try to un-weigh yourself by pushing down on the arms with your hands
- It is not necessary lift your hips completely off the chair
- Try to maintain 10 to --20 seconds