

# Basic Conditioning Exercises for the Back

**Note to Physician:** The two sets of exercises shown here may be useful when choosing an exercise routine for patients with acute muscle spasm of the back and resulting pain. These exercises may help appropriate patients strengthen their backs and reduce the risk of further injury.

**Note to Patient:** Consult your doctor before attempting these exercises. If your doctor recommends any of these exercises for you, start them slowly. Don't over do it! Follow your doctor's instructions carefully. Consult your doctor if pain occurs.

## Set 1: Flexion Exercises

For patients who have pain while walking and standing.

### Exercise 1

Take a deep breath; exhale slowly.

Tighten your abdominal and buttock muscles and hold your back flat against the floor for a count of 5. Repeat very slowly 5 times.



### Exercise 2

With both hands on one knee, bring that knee up as near to your chest as possible.

Return your knee to the starting position. Relax. Repeat 10 times with each knee.



### Exercise 3

Tighten your abdominal muscles and hold your back flat.

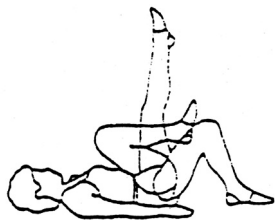
Then bring both knees up to your chest, grasp your knees with your hands, and hold your knees against your chest for about 30 seconds.



### Exercise 4

Bring one knee to your chest; straighten that knee by extending your leg as far as possible;

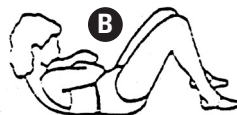
bend knee and return to original position. Relax. Repeat 5 times with each leg. *NOTE: This exercise is not recommended for patient with sciatic pain.*



### Exercise 5

Take starting position with your hands across your chest.

Curl up, bringing your shoulder blades off the floor about 30°. Keep your head in a fixed position with your chin close to your chest.



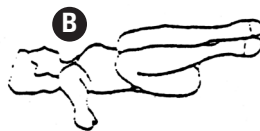
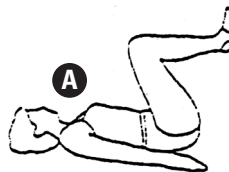
Lower your shoulders without touching your head to the floor. Keep your chin in a tuck position. Repeat 5 to 10 times in a steady rhythm.



### Exercise 6

Flex your knees and hips.

Keeping your knees together, roll your knees from side to side as far as is comfortable. Repeat 10 times in each direction.



### Exercise 7

Extend one leg fully. Flex the hip and knee of your other leg and place that ankle on outside of extended leg's thigh.



Pull knee to opposite shoulder. Hold for a count of 3. Rest for a count of 3. Repeat 10 times with each leg.

## Set 2: Extension Exercises

For patients who have pain mostly while sitting and standing, which is relieved by walking.

### Exercise 8



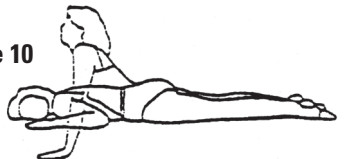
Turn slowly onto your abdomen. Keep muscles relaxed. Place arms beside your body. Hold position for 5 minutes.

### Exercise 9



Remain on your abdomen with your legs extended. Place your elbow under your shoulders. Gently push yourself up to rest on your elbows and forearms. Hold for 5 minutes. Lower to starting position.

### Exercise 10



Remain on your abdomen. Place your hands (palms down) near your shoulders. Press the top half of your body up by straightening your arms, while the bottom half of your body remains on the floor. Lower to starting position. Repeat 10 times slowly.

### Exercise 11

Stand with your feet well apart. Place your hands (fingers pointing backwards) in the small of your back. Lean back as far as possible. Return to starting position. Repeat 10 times.

