

STRETCHES FOR BACK PAIN

WHICH ONES SHOULD I DO?

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WHEN DO YOU GET PAIN?...

Do you have pain when sitting or standing? Or when bending or lifting? When walking or running... or all of the above? There are many cause of back pain but many can be relieved and treated with the right stretches, the right advice and the right treatment.

In this article I will outline the right stretches to do for when you get back pain from different postural positions. However, I recommend that if you have an injury, acute pain, persistent or chronic pain that does not improve from these stretches, that you see us for a Physiotherapy Assessment and consultation. There maybe many factors why your pain is only temporary relieved with stretching, and these maybe anything from poor core stability, spinal strength, leg and pelvic muscle imbalance or significant damage to spinal structures such as a disc or nerve roots. We can identify the cause of the pain and help you with treatment and rehab program to get you on the road to begin pain free.

1. MCKENZIE EXTENSIONS



This is my favourite exercise, an ultimately the most effective for disc pressure pain developed from sitting, lifting, bending. If you **cannot sit for long periods** without getting lower back pain, have pain across the lower pain after **bending or reaching and lifting**, then try this stretch to help relieve your pain and reduce your symptoms over time. Even if you don't get back pain but only tightness or mild discomfort, and you sit all day at work, then you need to be doing this exercise. If you can bending forward well, but find you can't bend back very far or it's stiff, then start doing McKenzie Extensions every few days.

Lying on your front, put your hands underneath your shoulder in a push up position. Relax your lower back and buttocks and slowly push your upper body backwards, trying to keep you pelvis on the floor and curve the lower back. If you can make it to the top and straighten your arms, slowly breath out and sag the lower back. Only push up to the tightness and not into the pain. Slowly lower, pause and repeat. The ideal repetitions is 3 sets of 10, twice a day.

If you cannot get on the floor or your floor environment is not ideal, do the same exercise in standing as pictured. It is the same movement but a little harder to do, so the floor is the best option as the back is in a un-loaded position.

2. LUMBAR ROTATIONS



This stretch is **essential for stiff lower backs in general**, and great to do if your back becomes tight or you have **pain from sitting or standing**. You may feel a click or gentle pop when doing this exercise but this should give relief.

Lying on your back, bend one knee up and hold it with your opposite hand. Slowly move you leg over to that side until you feel a tightness in your lower back. Again, don't go into the pain only the tightness. You may also feel a good stretch in your gluteal muscles. Every time you breath out, try to relax you lower back and let it rotate. You need to be holding this stretch for 45-60sec at a time. Repeat both sides twice, and then do the tighter side one more time.

3. QUADRATUS LUMBORUM / LUMBAR EXTENSORS

If you are like me and have a **lower back with an excessive lordotic curve**, you may experience pain from **walking, standing for long periods or running**. Most people who get pain from these positions will have tight muscles in other areas, and often than not, an **anterior pelvic tilt** and weak inner core muscles as well as hamstrings and glutes, which also need to be address in your rehab program.

Starting with your right leg out in front of you, bend the left leg out to the side as pictured. Reach forward with you hand and grab your foot. Make sure your knee is bent right up to you ribs to start with, don't have your leg out straight.



With your right arm, pull your body towards your thigh to feel a slight stretch in the lower back. Push your left knee downwards and rotate your body away so you are now 90° to your right leg. This will increase the stretch to the left of your lower back. Try to increase the stretch as tolerated by straightening your right leg, but keep you ribs on your thigh. It does not matter if you cant get you leg straight, as long as you are getting a stretch in the lower back. This is a lower back stretch not a hamstring stretch!. Again, repeat with the other side and do this twice each side and then one more on the tighter side.

Make sure you also stretch your hip **flexors, gluteals, hamstrings and quadriceps** as these are also very important.

For more information or questions on your pain or on further stretches, **email me at: timkeeley@physiofitness.com.au**