

## BACK EXERCISES

### STRETCHING EXERCISES

#### 1. Cat and camel stretching exercise:

Get down on your hands and knees on the floor. Relax your head and allow it to droop. Round your back up toward the ceiling until you feel a nice stretch in your upper, middle, and lower back. Hold this stretch for 20 seconds. Return to the starting position with a flat back while you are on all fours. Let your back sway by pressing your stomach toward the floor. Lift your head and buttocks toward the ceiling. Hold this stretch for 20 seconds.

Or

**Alternate cat and camel exercise:** Instead of holding for 20 seconds repeat 20 times up and down



FIG.1

## 2 .Lower back stretch:

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Place your hands on your back to add support to your lower back. Press your hips forward and slightly bend backwards. Try to keep your knees straight. Hold this position for 20 seconds, release, and repeat after ten seconds of rest.(fig.2)



## 3. Pelvic tilt:

Lie on your back with your knees bent. In this relaxed position, the back will not be touching the floor. Tighten your abdominal muscles so that your back presses flat against the floor. Hold for ten seconds then relax for five seconds. Repeat three times and gradually build to 10 repetitions. (fig.3)



FIG.3

#### 4. Knees-to-chest:

Lie on your back with both legs straight. Bring one knee up to your chest, pressing the back into the floor (pelvic tilt). Hold for ten seconds and repeat five times. Repeat exercise on other leg (fig.4).



FIG.4

#### 5. Back stretch on elbows:

Lie on your stomach. Tighten your buttock muscles. Use your elbows to push your upper body off the floor. Hold for ten seconds. Let your back relax and sag. Repeat 10 times. Discontinue any exercise that produces or increases pain in the leg.



FIG.5

## 6. Back stretch on hands:

Lie on your stomach. Tighten your buttock muscles. Use your arms to push your upper body off the floor. Hold for five seconds. Let your back relax and sag. Repeat 10 times. Discontinue any exercise that produces or increases pain in the leg. (fig.6).



FIG.6



FIG.7

## 7. Prayer stretch:

Kneeling position. Knees should be spread shoulder width apart. Extend your hands and arms in front of you. Bring your buttock towards heel, do not slouch. Holds the stretch for 20 seconds and go back to starting position, rest 10 seconds. Repeat 3 – 5 sets. Not for people with knee problems. (fig.7)



## Strengthening exercises for back

### 1. Long Lever Crunch:

Lie on your back with your heels on a chair or bench. Keep knees at 90 degree angle and extend your arms over your head (covering your ears). Lift torso slowly off the ground while you PRESS your heels against the bench. Hold position at top of motion before lowering (fig.8 and 9)



FIG.8



FIG.9

### 2. Lift and Rotate:

This is a TWO-PART abdominal exercise. Lie on your back with your arms extended forward as if you were driving a car, or better yet, hold some type of resistance such as a ball. Place feet on the floor with heels comfortably away from buttocks. Keep your arms straight above your shoulders. **PART 1:** Lift torso off the floor, extending arms towards the ceiling. **PART 2:** With the torso off the floor, rotate slowly from side to side. Important tip: make sure you rotate from your waist to optimize the challenge to your oblique muscles. Rotate from one side to the other side a few times and then lower. (Fig.10 and 11)



FIG.10& 11

### 3. Reverse Rotation:

Lie on your stomach with a rolled-up towel directly under your navel. Spread your legs about shoulder width apart. With your hands behind your ears rotate your torso to one side by lifting your shoulder a few inches off the ground. HOLD. Lower slowly and lift the other shoulder off the floor a few inches and HOLD.( fig.12)



FIG.12

### 4. PRONE ON HANDS EXTENSION:

While lying on your stomach, tighten your buttock muscles; push up your chest only with both hands simultaneously while keeping your pelvis flat against the floor. Push your back up until you reach a comfortably extended position. Repeat 5 times and gradually increase to 10 repetitions (fig.13)



## 5. Prone Lying and hand extension:

Lie on your stomach with your arms straight and palms down. Tighten your buttock muscles; raise your arms 8 inches off the floor. Hold your arms and shoulders in the air for 5 seconds. Keep your toes stationary to the floor. As your become stronger, try to increase your holding time by a 10 seconds.

Repeat this exercise 3 times. Muscle Areas Involved: Arm, chest, shoulder, neck and upper back muscles. (Fig. 14)



FIG.14

## 6. Prone Lying and Leg extension:

Lie on your stomach with your arms straight and palms down, extend your arms on the floor in front of you. Tighten your buttock muscles: raise your legs and hold them in the air for 5 seconds. As your back becomes stronger you may increase your holding time. Repeat this exercise 3 times. Muscle Areas Involved: Leg raises strengthen the hips, lower back, hips, buttocks and hamstrings (fig.15)



FIG.15

## 7. Prone lying alternate arms and legs:

Lie on your stomach with your arms straight and palms down, Lift and alternate your arms and legs. First right arm - left leg and left arm - right leg. Hold momentarily. Repeat 10 sets desired.

Muscle Areas Involved: Arm raises strengthen the upper arms, shoulders, and chest. Leg raises strengthen the lower back, hips, buttocks and hamstrings (fig.16)



FIG.16

## What can I do for relief when I've hurt my lower back?

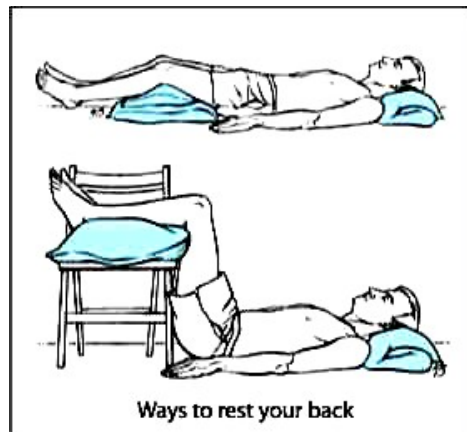


FIG.18

The best position for relief when your back hurts is to lie on your back on the floor with pillows under your knees, with your hips and knees bent and your feet on a chair or just with your hips and knees bent. This takes the pressure and weight off your back. (fig.18)