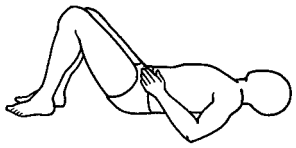
# Lumbar Stretching and Strengthening Home Exercise Program

## 1. Neutral Spine Position

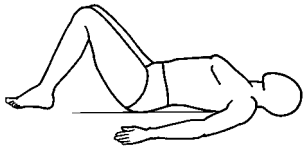
- Perform a pelvic tilt. Rock your pelvis back and forth until you find a position midway between a flat back and an arched back.
- Draw your abdominals in without moving your back. ***Don't hold your breath.***
- Your cue is _____.
- Hold position for _____ seconds.

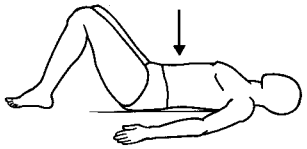


Perform _____ sets, _____ repetitions, _____ times/day.

## 2. Pelvic Tilts

- Lay on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Tilt your pelvis forward arching your lower back slightly.
- "Rock" your pelvis backward using your abdominal muscles, pushing the small of your back against floor. Do not push with your feet.
- Hold for _____ seconds and relax.





Perform _____ sets, _____ repetitions, _____ times/day.
May also perform in sitting.

## 3. Pelvic Tilt or Pelvic Rock

- Lay on your side with your hips and knees bent (with pillow underneath side or without).
- Lower your pelvis towards your heels.
- Raise pelvis towards your ear.
- Perform the movement slow, smooth, and with controlled movement. You should feel a stretch, but not pain.

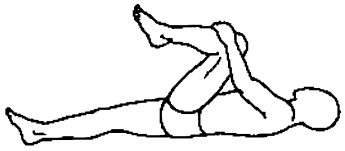




Perform _____ sets, _____ repetitions, _____ times/day.
May also perform in sitting.

## 4. Knees to Chest

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Lift your left knee, and with aid of your arms, pull your knee gently toward your chest until a stretch is felt in your lower back.
- Hold _____ seconds.
- Return your leg to starting position and relax.
- Repeat with your right leg.
- Repeat with knee to opposite shoulder.



Perform _____ sets, _____ repetitions, _____ times/day.

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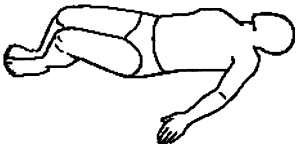
## 5. Both Knees to Chest



- Lay on your back with your knees bent.
- Lift both knees to your chest one at a time with aid of your arms until a stretch is felt in your lower back.
- Hold _____ seconds.

Perform _____ sets, _____ repetitions, _____ times/day.
May also perform in sitting.

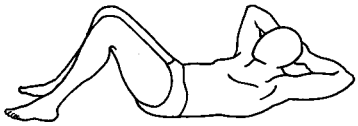
## 6. Segmental Pelvic Rotations



- Lay on back with knees bent and feet flat on floor, shoulders pressed down.
- Keeping your knees together, slowly move your legs to the left, moving knees first, then hips, then low back and upper back off the floor. Keep your shoulders on the floor.
- To return to the starting position, first push your upper back into the floor, followed by your hips and knees.

Perform _____ sets, _____ repetitions, _____ times/day.

## 7. Partial Sit-Ups

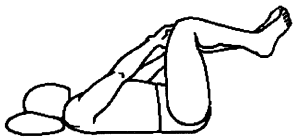




- Lay on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on floor. (Perform a pelvic tilt).
- Place your hands behind your head or place your hands fisted under chin.
- Tuck your chin and raise your shoulder blades off floor.
- Lower your shoulders and arms to the floor (and release pelvic tilt).
- Relax.
- Diagonal sit-ups: Repeat, rotating first to the right and then to the left.

Perform _____ sets, _____ repetitions, _____ times/day.

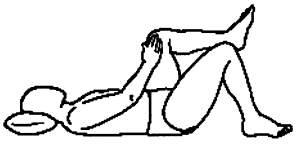
## 8. Side Knee Stopper



- Lay on your back with knees bent. Raise your knees to approximately 90º and place both hands on inside of one knee.
- Push your knees into hands for _____ seconds.
- Repeat to the opposite side.

Perform _____ sets, _____ repetitions, _____ times/day.

## 9. Lower Abdominals



- Lay on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor.
- Lift one knee towards your chest and place opposite hand on your knee.
- Resist your knee against your hand while bracing your lower abdominal muscles. ***Do not hold your breath.***
- Hold for _____ seconds.
- Repeat with your opposite knee and hand.

Perform _____ sets, _____ repetitions, _____ times/day.

*Continued*

## 10. Prone on Elbows

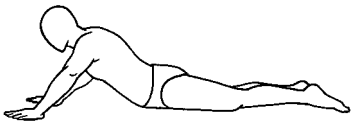
- Lay on your stomach on the floor or bed.
- Raise or prop up on both elbows, allowing your back to sag and form an arch.
- Hold _____ seconds and return to starting position.



Perform _____ sets, _____ repetitions, _____ times/day.

## 11. Prone Press Up

- Lay on your stomach with your hands near your shoulders with your elbows bent.
- Slowly straighten your arms and press up, keeping your hips down on the flat surface.
- Hold this position for _____ seconds.
- Return to starting position.



Perform _____ sets, _____ repetitions, _____ times/day.

## 12. Alternate Arm Lifts

- Lay on your stomach, over a pillow with your arms raised above your head, and legs straight.
- Slowly tighten your right hand, forearm, and shoulder musculature.
- Raise your arm three inches off floor.
- Hold _____ seconds.
- Slowly lower arm to floor.
- Repeat sequence with left arm.



Perform _____ sets, _____ repetitions, _____ times/day.

## 13. Alternate Leg Lifts

- Lay on your stomach, over a pillow with your legs straight and arms crossed above head.
- Rest your head on your arms or turn your head either right or left.
- Slowly tighten right buttock and thigh musculature.
- Raise your right leg approximately three inches off floor.
- Hold _____ seconds.



Repeat above sequence with left leg.

## 14. Extension to Neutral (Chest Lifts)

- Place multiple pillows under your stomach and hips. Lie face down with your arms at your sides.
- Raise your head, trunk and chest off floor to a horizontal position (parallel to table or floor).
- Hold _____ seconds and slowly lower trunk, chest, and head to floor and relax.





Perform _____ sets, _____ repetitions, _____ times/day.

*Continued*

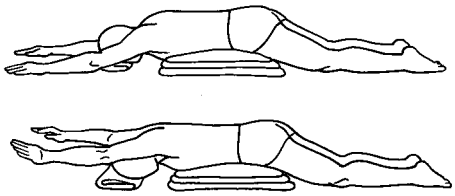
## 15. Alternate Arm and Leg Lifts

- Lay on your stomach with a towel roll under your forehead, arms straight and over your head.
- Slowly tighten your right arm and your left leg.
- Raise your arm and legs approximately three inches toward ceiling.
- Hold five seconds.
- Slowly lower your right arm and your left leg to the floor.
- Repeat entire sequence with your left arm and your right leg.



## 16. Bilateral Arm Lifts

- Lay on your stomach with a towel roll under your forehead, legs straight and your arms overhead and straight.
- Slowly tighten your hands, forearms, and shoulders.
- Slowly raise your arms off the floor approximately three inches.
- Hold _____ seconds.
- Slowly lower your arms to floor.



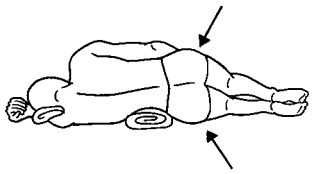
## 17. Sidelying Positional Distraction

- Lay on your side with hips and knees bent.
- Place a bolster or towel roll _____.
- Lie in this position for no longer than _____ minutes.
- If pain does not decrease, change the position of the bolster.
- If pain still does not decrease discontinue exercise.
- Only lie on the side specified by your therapist.



## 18. Positional Distraction with Pelvic Tilts

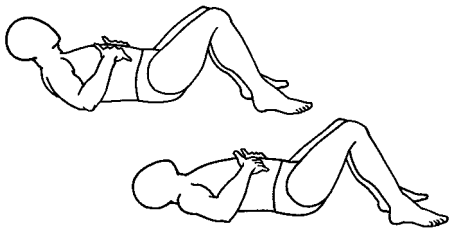
- Achieve the position stated above.
- Once in this position, gently perform _____ pain free repetitions by tightening buttock muscles, stomach muscles and tuck buttocks.



## 19. Abdominal Bracing

- Lay on the floor with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Place your fingers over your stomach muscles.
- Raise your head and shoulders off the floor.
- Try to keep your muscles tight as you lower your head and shoulders back to the floor.

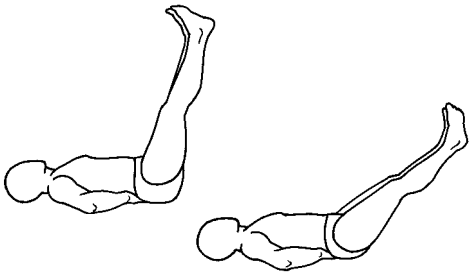
Perform _____ sets, _____ repetitions, _____ times/day.



## 20. Double Leg Lowering

- Lay on the floor with your legs in the air.
- Press your back to the floor.
- Place your hands under your back to monitor movement. Slowly lower both legs back to the floor.
- As soon as you feel your back begin to arch, raise legs back to start position. ***Do not let back arch.*** Limit the distance your legs lower to 1/2 to 3/4 if you feel your back arch.

Perform _____ sets, _____ repetitions, _____ times/day.





*The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem.*