

3 EXERCISES prevent back pain

This guide covers the “Big 3” exercises, developed by Dr. Stuart McGill for back pain care. The recommended pattern is to hold each repetition for 10 seconds, repeat 10-15 repetitions of each exercise once daily. **Stop the exercise** if it is painful, or if you are unable to maintain proper technique.

CURL UP



Instructions: Lay down on your back, and place your hands in the small of your back (under lumbar spine not the pelvis). Bend one knee to prevent using the hip flexors, and contract your abdominal muscles to lift your chest and shoulderblades off the ground. Hold for 10 seconds and return to the start position. Rest for 2-3 seconds and repeat 10-15 times.

Tips: Do not hold your breath, use your elbows to push you up, or lead with your head. **To turn up the heat**, place a small towel under your back, or try crossing your arms on your chest, or placing your hands by your ears.

SIDE PLANK



Instructions: Start on your side, resting on your elbow with your knees bent. Contract your oblique (side) muscles to lift your hips off the ground and straighten your spine into the neutral position. Hold for 10 seconds and return to the start position. Rest for 2-3 seconds and repeat 10-15 times.

Tips: Maintain even breathing, and engage your abdominal muscles. **To turn up the heat**, try extending your legs and doing the plank motion with straight legs instead of bent at the knees!

4 PT. LEG LIFT



Instructions: Lift up one of your legs, and the opposite arm. Engage your abdominal muscles to keep your spine in the neutral position. Hold for 10 seconds and return to the start position. Rest for 2-3 seconds and repeat 10-15 times.

Tips: Try placing a ball on the small of your back, and keeping it there while you do the exercise – if it stays in place, you are maintaining a neutral spine. To progress the exercise instead of holding the arm and leg still continuously move the arm up and down for 10 seconds again without moving out of the neutral lumbar spine.

Did you know?
Every Personal Health Plan covers treatment by a licensed physiotherapist!