

BACK STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

DORSAL RAISE



- Lay on your front with your arms bent and fingers on your temples.
- Slowly lift your chest and stomach off the floor, keeping the hips and legs still.
- Hold for 2-3 seconds before slowly lowering the upper body back to the floor.
- Movement should be coming from your lower back only.

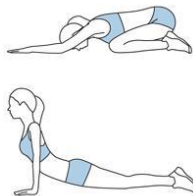
Variations

- Extend your arms out in front of you to add extra weight to lift.

Muscles worked - Erector spinae, Multifidus.

Tiger Push-up

Start with hands and knees on the ground. Sit back on your heels and extend your arms forward into child's pose.



Raise your head and slide your torso forward along the ground, arching your spine and straightening your arms so that they are supporting your weight (bottom). Hold for one to four seconds. Reverse the motion by lowering your chest to the ground, bending your knees

and raising your hips, and sliding back into child's pose.

Targets: Lower-back muscles, plus shoulders and chest.

Pelvic tilts

Stretches and strengthens the lower back



Start position: Lie on your back. Place a small, flat cushion or book under your head. Bend your knees and keep your feet straight and hip-width apart. Keep your upper body relaxed and your chin gently tucked in.

Action: Gently flatten your low back into the floor and contract your stomach muscles. Now tilt your pelvis towards your heels until you feel a gentle arch in your lower back, feeling your back muscles contracting and return to the starting position.

Repeat 10 to 15 times, tilting your pelvis back and forth in a slow rocking motion.

Tips:

- Keep your deep abdominals working throughout.
- Don't press down through the neck, shoulders or feet.

Modification

Place one hand on your stomach and the other under your lower back to feel the correct muscles working.

Hip Bridge

How to do it: Lie on your back, feet flat and hip-width apart, arms relaxed, and knees bent. Squeeze your buttocks as you lift your hips, creating a straight line from the knees to the shoulders. Hold for a slow count of two, then lower slowly. Build up to 10 to 12 repetitions.



What it does: This move counteracts the effects of too much chair time, which puts excessive pressure on the spine. It stretches the hip flexors and strengthens the muscles that stabilize the spine, including those of the lower back, the gluteals, and the large, stabilizing abdominal muscles.

Make it harder: Lift one foot off the floor and hold it straight up toward the ceiling, foot flexed, keeping the hips even. This is much more challenging, so start by holding this pose for just a few seconds. Repeat five to eight times, then switch legs.

Bird Dog

How to do it: Begin on all fours, knees hip-width apart and under the hips, hands flat and shoulder-width apart. Squeeze your abs by pulling belly toward spine. Keep the spine neutral, without arching the back or rotating the hips, and extend your right leg back and your left arm straight ahead. Hold for two to three seconds or as long as you can maintain form. Repeat five to six times on each side.



What it does: This exercise improves muscle balance and coordination, making it easier to keep the spine stable for everyday moves, such as walking, running, dancing, and carrying a child. It also tones your glutes, upper back, lower spine, and hamstrings. Tighter abs also keep the spine supported.

Make it harder: Gradually increase the holding time for 10 to 12 counts. For an additional challenge, add movement to the mix by slowly lifting and lowering the extended arm and leg a few inches, maintaining proper form throughout.

Side Plank

How to do it: Lie on your right side, in a straight line from head to feet, resting on your forearm. Your elbow should be directly under your shoulder. With your abdominals gently contracted, lift your hips off the floor, maintaining the line. Keep your hips square and your neck in line with your spine. Hold 20 to 40 seconds and lower. Repeat two to three times, alternating sides. (If this is too challenging, start with bent knees.)



What it does: Builds strength and endurance in the core. This will help keep your lower back protected and stable during activities that require movement in the hips or back.

Make it harder: While holding the basic position, lift and lower your top leg. Gradually work toward holding the upper leg for 5 to 10 counts. Another option: Instead of resting on your forearm, support your body with your hand, palm on the floor and under the shoulder, elbow straight.

Lunge

How to do it: With your abs gently contracted and hands on hips, take a big step forward with your right foot. Sink down so your right knee is at a 90-degree angle, then push back to the starting position without pausing. Repeat 8 to 12 times, then switch legs and repeat.



What it does: Improves whole-body control, which is key to protecting the spine during walking, running, or stair-climbing. Recruits both surface and deeper stabilizing muscles along the sides, glutes, hamstrings, quads, and calves.

Make it harder: Set up to do a basic lunge, but this time step your right foot out on a diagonal, not straight ahead, as if the foot is pointing to 2 o'clock on a clock face. (When you lunge with the left foot, step it out to 10 o'clock.) The change in foot placement makes it harder to balance. As you get stronger, try it with your hands interlaced behind your head or hold a dumbbell in each hand to increase resistance.

Single Arm Row

Note – If you don't have any dumbbells a can of beans or similar from the kitchen cupboard will do the job just as well!



- Place one knee and the same hand on a bench with the other foot on the floor and dumbbell in the other hand.
- Lean forwards so that the spine is straight and approximately parallel to the floor.
- Pull the dumbbell upwards, towards your chest.
- Do not allow excessive rotation of the back, or shoulder elevation.
- Lower the dumbbell back to the starting position under control.

Variations

- Perform without a bench with the feet wide apart, knees bent and hips flexed forwards.
- Maintain good alignment throughout.

Muscles worked - Latissimus Dorsi, Rhomboids, Biceps Brachii, Trapezius.

Bent Over Dumbbell Row



- Position yourself with a wide stance, knees bent and hips flexed forwards
- Hold the dumbbells with straight arms, at around knee level with the hands just wider than your knees and palms facing down
- Keep the back still as you pull the bar in, towards your stomach
- Return the weights back to the starting position, maintaining control throughout

Variations & progressions

- Perform with the hands in a supinated position (palms facing upwards)

Muscles worked - Rhomboids, Trapezius, Biceps Brachii