



WESTWOOD MASSAGE LOWER BACK CARE

Lower Back Mobilisation (1)

Gentle movement is a great way of easing low back pain. A back rock is a simple and effective back care



- Gather both knees to the chest.
- Rock gently until the back feels comfortable – about one per second is a good rhythm but encourage the client to find the rate that works for them.
- You can do this a few times a day and whenever you are in pain.
- You can also progress to doing knee circles.
- Finish with a gentle hug of both knees to chest

Standing twist (1a)

- Keeping the knees soft with a slight bend, gently twist from side to side.
- The movement comes from the pelvis and belly.
- Let the arms be loose and gently slap the back on the twist



Static Stretches

With all the static stretches below, aim to hold the stretch for 15-30 seconds or even up to a minute.

Gluteal/general low back stretch (2)

- Hug knee to chest and hold.
- Keep other leg straight.
- Alternate knees and repeat.



Spinal Twists (3)

- Take right leg over straight left leg.
- Twist head and body slowly to right to give low back a gentle twist.
- Repeat on the other side



Piriformis (Great for Sciatic pain)

- Cross right leg onto opposite knee in figure 4 position.
- Bring both legs towards chest and interlock hands around left leg. Slowly bring leg to the chest with the breath to achieve a stretch of the piriformis. **(4)**
- To increase the stretch place right hand on knee with left hand on ankle. Push knee gently away from you. **(5)**
- Repeat on otherside.



Psoas, Hip Flexor Stretch (6)

- Lie at end of bed or similar.
- Hug one knee to the chest and let the other dangle over the end.
- Wait and hold and feel the stretch.
- Repeat on other side.



Standing Stretches

Standing QL Stretch (7)

- Stand against wall to keep torso straight while carrying out stretch.
- Slowly slide right hand down right leg to take body into right side bend stretching left side.
- Repeat on otherside.



Glute Medius Stretch (8)

- Cross left leg in front of right.
- Slowly slide right hand down right leg to stretch left gluteus medius.
- Can increase stretch by bringing left arm over head.
- Reverse leg position and repeat on other side.



Hamstring Stretch (9)

- Clasp hands together in the "Charlies Angels" pistol grip.
- Cross one leg in front of the other.
- Come down into a forward bend taking care to keep the head and neck floppy.
- Hold the position where you feel the stretch in the hamstrings.
- Repeat on otherside.



Childs Pose

- Kneel on the floor
- Lean forwards with the arms outstretched as far as possible and hands on the floor
- Push your buttocks down towards your feet keeping your hands still to increase the stretch
- Hold for between 10 and 30 seconds
- Variation – Put the left hand out to the left side and cover it with the right hand so the spine comes into a C shape to the left. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat to the right.



Back Arch Stretch

- On all fours on the floor, arch your back up as high as possible
- Hold for between 10 and 30 seconds then relax.



Back Slump Stretch

- Kneel on all fours and let your back slump down as if trying to get the navel to the floor
- Hold for between 10 and 30 seconds
- Variation – Twist round to look over the left shoulder and bring your left hip to the left side to get a C shape curve in your spine. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat to the right side. This movement can be done without holding the stretch so repeat to the left and right side like a dog wagging his tail!



Back Rotation Stretch

- Stand upright with your arms folded across your chest
- Rotate your shoulders around to one side
- Hold for between 10 and 30 seconds



Knee rolls



Stretches and mobilises the spine

Start position: Lie on your back. Place a small flat cushion or book under your head. Keep your knees bent and together. Keep your upper body relaxed and your chin gently tucked in.

Action: Roll your knees to one side, followed by your pelvis, keeping both shoulders on the floor. Hold the stretch for one deep breath and return to the starting position.

Repeat 8 to 10 times, alternating sides.

Tips:

- Only move as far as feels comfortable.
- Place a pillow between your knees for comfort.

Self treatment of Trigger Points

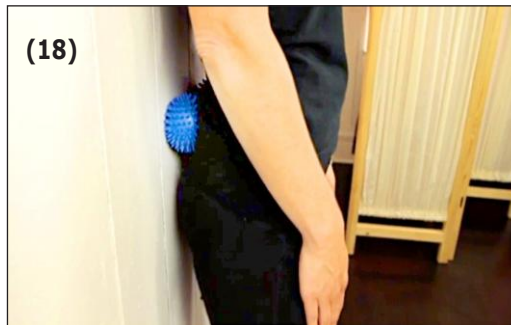
Using a ball or hands to self treat trigger points and generally work tight muscles can feel great! Here we use a spiky ball although a tennis ball or golf ball can also be effective.

Moving with the ball against the wall

Place the ball between your body and a wall. **(17)**

By gently moving around you can enable the ball to work the areas of soreness – for example in the buttocks or low back. **(18)**

Feel free to work at your own pace and wait and hold on any tender areas.



Heat – Heat is best applied to new injuries after approximately 48 hours when the worst of the inflammation has subsided. For any long term muscular pain I would usually recommend heat over ice. Applying heat will bring fresh blood to the area which will bring with it oxygen and nutrients needed to heal and removal of waste products, it will also help to relax the muscles. Use either a hot water bottle or heat pad and apply the heat to the area ideally twice a day for at least 10 minutes at a time. Be careful not to burn the skin.

Move – Exercise will really help to stretch and strengthen the muscles and keep you more flexible and supple which in turn will help to reduce pain. Pilates is an excellent form of exercise and can really help with mobility. Find something you enjoy and build it up gradually, be it walking, swimming, cycling or whatever interests you. The human body is designed to move and ideally you should aim to be getting up and moving around every 20 minutes even if it is just a gentle walk around the house, anything is better than nothing. Exercise is the best tonic for most soft tissue conditions but only exercise within your capabilities if it is safe to do so. On the other side of the coin too much exercise can also be damaging so be mindful of not overdoing it.

Posture – So many soft tissue problems come from poor posture. Now days so many of us spend a lot of time sat at a desk looking at a computer or on our phones or I-pads. This encourages the poor posture we see today in so many people, rounded shoulders, shortening across the Pecs (muscles in the chest) and head protruding forwards. Poor posture in any form can put pressure and imbalances on the muscular system and cause pain so whilst this is not an easy one as much as you can be mindful of your posture during the day, again Pilates can be a great to help with this.

Overuse / Misuse – Overuse is another very common cause of pain or injury , if this is the case then the best thing to do if it is possible is to take a break from the thing that is causing you pain, this can however be easier said than done, especially if it is you work that is causing the problem! If it is your leisure pursuit that is causing pain (i.e tennis players suffering with tennis elbow) then it may be worth considering cross training so trying a different sport or fitness regime instead for a while. This can either be done by cutting the activity out altogether and doing something different instead or cutting down on the activity that is causing the pain and supplementing it with other things instead. Try this for 2-3 weeks to see if the injury/pain improves then gradually reintroduce the activity back in slowly.

Stress – It is estimated that stress causes up to 70% of all illness and disease, it can also have a really negative effect on the soft tissue of the body. When we are stressed the body will tense up, usually once the period of stress has passed the body will relax again but nowadays many of us are so busy and constantly rushing around that we are in a permanent state of stress and our body never has a chance to rest and recover. Try to slow down a bit (as much as is possible) and think about things you can do for a period of time every day to try and help reduce your stress levels whether this is meditation, Pilates, reading a book or going for a walk whatever works for you!

Diet / Hydration – ‘We are what we eat’ or so the saying goes. A healthy balanced diet and good hydration is so important to enable the body to remain in an optimum state of health. Carrying excess weight can put a huge strain on the body, not only the systems of the body such as the heart and lungs but also on the bones, joints and soft tissue. This can put added stress onto the body hence increasing pain especially in the back and knees. For more information go to <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life>

Sleep – The average adult needs 7-9 hours of sleep a night to maintain good health. Ensuring you have a good mattress and pillows that really support you and keep your spine in a neutral position is very important to help with pain. If you are unsure if your mattress or pillows are suitable go to a bed specialist for advice. Sleeping with a pillow in-between the legs may also help to reduce back pain.

Emotional Trauma / Anxiety / Depression – All these factors can increase pain in the soft tissue of the body and constant pain can increase these conditions it becomes a vicious cycle. It is so important to deal with any of these issues not only to help with pain but also to improve your mental health, it is a crippling illness to suffer alone. Fortunately nowadays these are no longer taboo subjects and help is available. <https://www.mind.org.uk>

