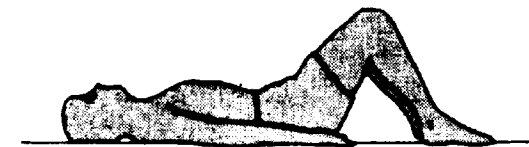


# EXERCISES FOR BETTER BACK CARE

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

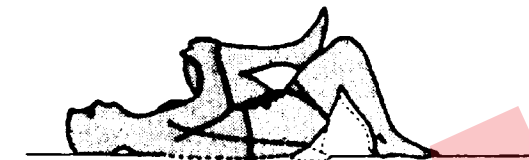
Follow your doctor's instructions carefully. Start slowly and gradually increase speed and repetition. **Don't overdo it.** But exercise daily or not at all. The important thing is to relax. Exercise on a rug or mat. Put a pillow under your neck. Dress comfortably; no shoes or socks. Stop doing any exercise that causes pain until you have checked with your doctor.



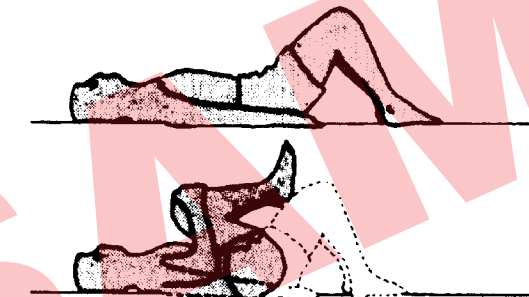
1. Lie on your back with knees bent. Feet flat on the floor. Take a deep breath and relax. Press the small of your back against the floor and tighten your stomach and seat muscles. This should cause the lower end of the pelvis to rotate forward. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax. Repeat \_\_\_\_ times.



2. Lie on your back with knees bent. Feet flat on the floor. Take a deep breath and relax. Grab **one** knee with both hands and pull it as close to your chest as possible. Return to starting position. Straighten leg. Return to starting position. Repeat \_\_\_\_ times for each leg, alternating legs.

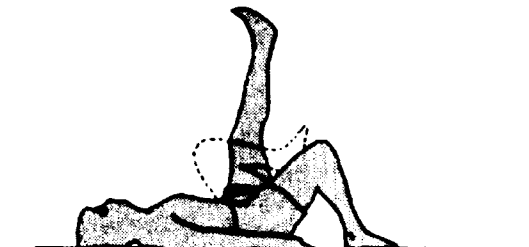


3. Lie on your back with knees bent. Feet on the floor. Take a deep breath and relax. Grasp **both** knees and pull them as close to your chest as possible. Straighten legs. Return to starting position. Relax. Repeat \_\_\_\_ times.



4. Lie on your back with knees bent. Feet flat on the floor. Take a deep breath and relax. Draw one knee to chest. Then point leg upward as far as possible. Return to starting position. Relax. Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times, alternating legs.

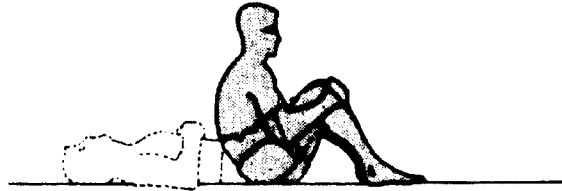
NOTE: This exercise is not recommended for patients with sciatic pain.



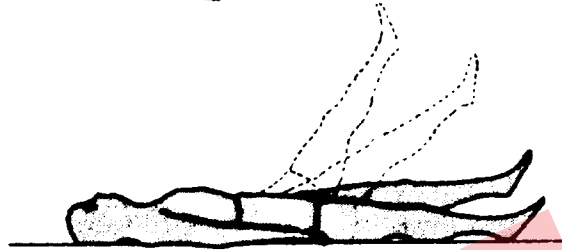
5. Lie on side with knees bent. Take a deep breath and relax. Slide upper knee toward chest as far as possible. Return to starting position. Relax. Repeat \_\_\_\_ times on each side.



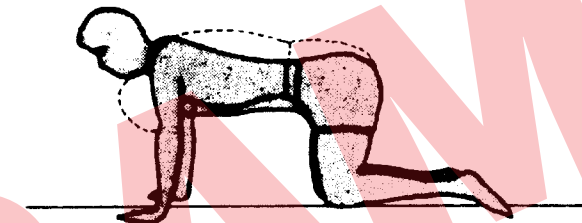
6. Lie on your stomach with your head on your hands. Take a deep breath and relax. Tighten your seat muscles. Hold for 2 seconds. Relax. Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



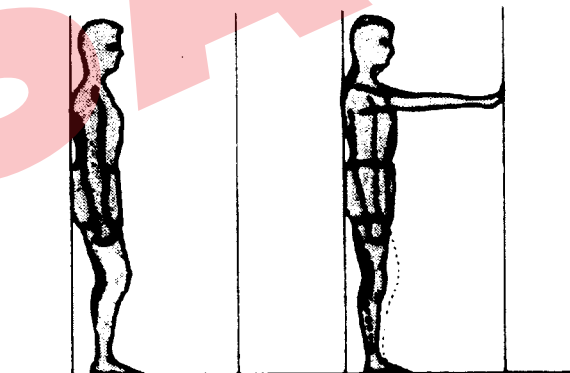
7. This exercise should not be started until the others have been done for several weeks. Lie on your back with knees bent. Feet flat on floor. Take a deep breath and relax. Pull up to a sitting position keeping knees bent. Return to starting position. Relax. Having someone hold your feet down can facilitate this exercise. Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



8. Lie on your back with your legs straight out, knees unbent and arms at your sides. Take a deep breath and relax. Raise legs one at a time as high as is comfortable and lower to floor as slowly as possible. Repeat 5 times for each leg.



9. Get down on your hands and knees. Take a deep breath and relax. Pull stomach in and curve back upward. Let head hang down. Now arch back and look up. Relax. Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.



10. Stand with your back against doorway. Place heels four inches away from frame. Take a deep breath and relax. Press the small of your back against doorway. Tighten your stomach and seat muscles, allowing your knees to bend slightly. This should cause the lower end of the pelvis to rotate forward (as in exercise 1). Press your neck up against doorway. Press both hands against opposite side of doorway and straighten both knees. Hold for 2 seconds. Relax. Repeat \_\_\_\_\_ times.

### HELPFUL HINTS FOR A HEALTHY BACK

Always sit all the way back in a chair with your back erect. When you lift any object from the floor, bend your legs and keep your back straight, and make your leg muscles do the work. Sleep on a firm mattress or put a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood board under a soft one. If you sleep on your back, put a pillow under your knees, not under your head. Keep your knees bent when sleeping on your side. Don't sleep on your stomach. When driving a car, keep the seat forward so your body is erect. On long trips, stop every hour or so and walk around to relieve tension and relax muscles.

When doing any work that requires standing, place one foot on a stool or bench. Be conscious of your posture and avoid "sway" back. Tuck the pelvis forward to straighten the back. Walk whenever you get the chance.

Once your backache is gone, get regular exercise and make a conscious effort to relax several times a day. If your back acts up, see your doctor immediately. Don't wait until it gets worse.