



Exercise guide

Lower back

Throughout the following exercises, the emphasis is on slow, controlled movement.

If you are currently receiving physiotherapy only do the exercises that your therapist has prescribed under your current treatment plan.

When carrying out the exercises make sure you are safe and stable, using support of counters or tables if needed. Make sure all exercises are pain free and if they cause pain stop doing them or go to an easier exercise. Do not exert yourself beyond your own capabilities.

Exercise guide – lower back knee hugs

- Lie on your back
- Slowly bring one knee up towards your chest using your hands to assist
- You should feel a light stretch in your lower back
- Gently lower the knee and repeat the movement with your other leg
- This exercise can be also be performed by raising both knees up towards your chest and adding a light stretch with your hands before releasing.

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions, holding for 10-15 seconds unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Knee rolls

- Lie on your back
- Draw your heels toward your bottom until your knees are around 90 degrees
- Keeping your feet and knees together and maintaining the upper body position slowly lower both knees to one side
- You should feel a light stretch in your lower back
- Repeat on the other side.

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions, holding for 10-15 seconds unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Four point kneeling with leg extensions

- Start on your hands and knees
- Your hands should be directly underneath your shoulders and knees under hips
- Lightly contract your stomach and gluteal muscles
- Slowly straighten one leg out behind you
- Return to the starting position and repeat the motion 10 times



- It is important to maintain a flat back throughout the whole exercise and prevent your pelvis rocking from side to side

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions, holding for 3-5 seconds unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Bridging

- Lie on your back with your feet on the floor and knees at 90 degrees
- Lightly contract your stomach and gluteal muscles
- Pushing down through your heels to slowly raise up your hips
- Ensure a straight line is formed between your shoulders, hips and knees
- Hold for 5 seconds before slowly controlling the movement back to the starting position

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions, holding for 5 seconds unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Piriformis stretch

- Start lying on your back
- Bend your knees to around 90 degrees
- Place your heel on the opposite thigh just above the knee
- Slowly bring your thigh toward your stomach until you feel a stretch in the buttock
- Hold 10-15 seconds before returning to the start position and repeat.

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions; hold 10-15 seconds unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Pelvic tilt

- Sit upright in a chair with feet firmly placed on the floor
- While keeping your upper body and shoulders still tilt your pelvis backwards by slouching and rounding your lower back
- Then tilt your pelvis forward by arching your lower back
- Slowly repeat these movements.

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Proprioception – single leg stance

- Stand with feet shoulder width apart
- Ensure your pelvis is kept level and slowly raise one knee up to 90 degrees
- Hold your balance and stretch your arms out if required
- This can be progressed by taking the arms in front, above and to the side while holding balance on a single leg or taking the non-standing leg out to the side and in front of you
- Further progressions can include holding your balance while closing your eyes or throwing and catching a ball



- If you have difficulty initially it can be useful to perform this exercise in front of a long mirror or chair for support

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Jogging on the spot - 1 2 3 holds

- Start with feet a shoulder width apart
- Lift one knee to around 90 degrees
- Try to prevent your pelvis from tilting
- Slowly perform a small hop and control the landing
- Return to start position with a level pelvis and knee at 90 degrees before repeating
- This can be progressed by hopping forward, backward and to either side always return to the starting point

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Single leg hopping

- Start with one foot a stride length in front of the other and upper body upright
- Slowly dip until both knees are around 90 degrees, control the movement back to the starting position
- Ensure you keep your chin up and don't look down during the exercise
- Repeat with the legs reversed
- This can be progressed by increasing the length of hold or holding weights
- Complete 3 sets of 10 repetitions unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.
- Lunge
- Start with one foot a stride length in front of the other and upper body upright
- Slowly dip until both knees are around 90 degrees
- Control the movement back to the starting position
- Ensure you keep your chin up and don't look down during the exercise
- Repeat with the legs reversed
- This can be progressed by increasing the length of hold or holding weights

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Hip extension – standing

- Stand facing a wall or chair for balance
- Lightly tighten your stomach and gluteal muscles and slowly take one leg directly out behind you
- Avoid bending forward and rotating your lower back throughout the movement

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Psoas stretch

- Stand facing a wall or chair for balance with another chair just behind you



- Place the toes of one foot on the chair behind you and gently push your hips forward until you feel a stretch in the front of your hip
- Keep your foot on the chair and repeat

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions, holding each stretch for around 10-15 seconds unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Quadriceps strengthening – step up, down and sideways

- Stand facing a step
- Place one foot on the step, ensure your pelvis is level and slowly step up until your leg is straight
- Control the movement back until your rearmost foot gently brushes the ground
- Repeat 10 times on each side
- The key to this exercise is controlled movement throughout
- Repeat this process stepping down and to the side from the step
- For these exercises allow your heel to just touch the floor before immediately controlling the movement back to the starting position
- Ensure you don't let your hips and pelvis dip throughout the exercise
- If using an exercise step you can progress to a step through where you combine the step up and down phases
- For this exercise standing in front of a long mirror can aid your balance

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Hip extension – with flexed knee

- Start lying on your front
- Bend one knee to 90 degrees and slowly raise this leg off the floor by taking the heel toward the ceiling
- Return to start position before repeating with the other leg
- Avoid rotating your lower back as far as possible
- Repeat this exercise 10 times on each side

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Hip extension – prone

- Start lying on your front
- Lightly tighten your stomach and gluteal muscles and slowly raise one leg off the floor maintaining a straight leg
- Avoid rotating your lower back as far as possible
- Repeat this exercise 10 times on each side

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Four point kneeling with leg extensions



- Start on your hands and knees
- Your hands should be directly underneath your shoulders and knees under hips
- Lightly contract your stomach and gluteal muscles
- Slowly straighten one leg out behind you
- Return to the starting position and repeat the motion 10 times
- It is important to maintain a flat back throughout the whole exercise and prevent your pelvis rocking from side to side

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions, holding for 3-5 seconds unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Clams

- Lie on your side with your feet and knees together
- Bend knees to 90 degrees
- Lightly contract your stomach and gluteal muscles, keep feet together and raise the top knee as far as comfortable
- Ensure your body doesn't roll backwards during movement
- Slowly lower knee back to the starting position and repeat

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions, holding for 3-5 seconds unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Sit to stand

- Start in a seated position
- Slide your bottom forward toward the edge of the chair
- Ensure your feet are planted firmly on the floor a shoulder width apart
- Place your hands on your hips, maintaining a flat back, lightly contract your stomach muscles
- Bend forwards from your hips
- Slowly stand up until completely upright before slowly sitting back down
- Repeat this 10 times
- Try to not use your hands throughout the exercise however if needed use them to lightly facilitate the movement

Complete three sets of 10 repetitions unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.

Lumbar extensions

- Each of the following exercises should be held for 30 seconds to 1 minute and repeated up to 5 times or as directed by your physiotherapist.
- Start this exercise lying on your front with your hands resting at your sides
- Placing your hands behind your head and hold
- If uncomfortable a pillow can be placed underneath your waist
- This can be progressed by keeping your hips still, push up onto your elbows and slightly lifting your chin



- Or further progressed by placing your hands flat on the floor and straightening the elbows, again maintaining the hip position

Complete up to five times unless directed otherwise by your physiotherapist.