

# Exercise for a better back

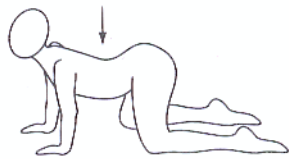
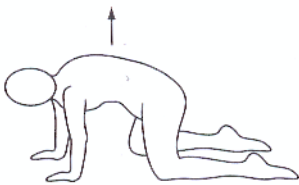
Spinal Mobility Exercises – perform daily

[www.backcare.org.uk](http://www.backcare.org.uk)

These exercises should be carried out slowly and deliberately. If you have a pain when you perform any of them, limit the particular exercise movement so that you are comfortable. If you feel pain when you start any movement, then it should not be carried out.

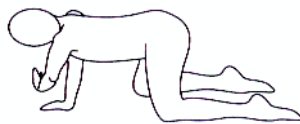


Starting position for all exercises is on all fours. Hands should be placed shoulder width apart, arms and thighs vertical. Use an exercise mat if you have one.



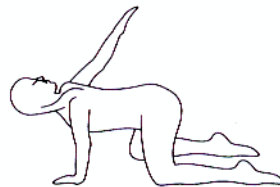
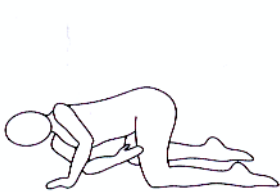
Arch the back, at the same time, look down at the floor. Then lower the stomach towards the floor, hollowing the back and at the same time look up at the ceiling. (If you are pregnant you should not do the second part of this exercise hollowing your back, instead keep your back straight.)

**Repeat 10 times**



Slowly walk the hands around to the right, back to the starting position, then around to the left.

**Repeat 5 – 10 times.**

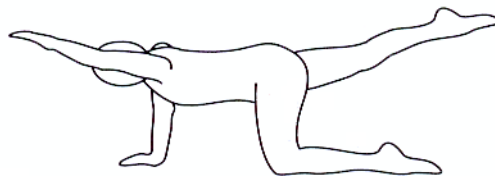


Raise one hand off the floor, reach underneath your body as far as you can. On the return, swing the arm out to the side as far as you can, then return to the starting position. Follow the moving hand with the eyes. Repeat with the other arm.

**Repeat 5 – 10 times.**

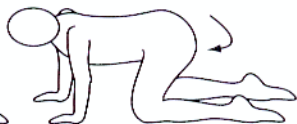


Draw alternate knees to the opposite elbow.  
**Repeat 10 times**



Stretch one arm forward in front, at the same time stretching the opposite leg out behind.

**Repeat 10 times**



Swing the seat from side to side in a controlled manner.

**Repeat 10 times.**



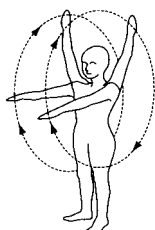
Sit back on your haunches. Lower the body forward and sit down so that the nose goes as close to the ground as comfortably possible. Move forward, running your nose along the ground as far as you can go before coming upright and repeating.

**Repeat 10 times.**

## Upright Mobility Exercises – perform daily

Only progress to the exercises on this and the following pages when the spinal mobility exercises are pain free.

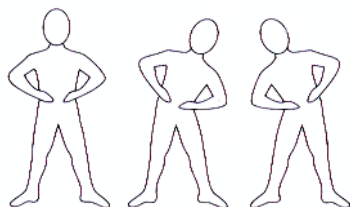
For standing exercises, keep your upper leg and stomach muscles contracted, maintain the natural curves in the spine and stand with your knees slightly bent.



### **Arm swinging:**

Start with your feet hip width apart, arms loosely by your sides. Raise both arms forward, upwards, backwards and sideways in a circular motion, brushing your ears on the way.

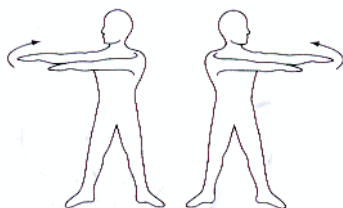
**Repeat 10 times.**



### **Side bends:**

Start with your feet hip width apart, hands on hips. Bend slowly to the left and then slowly to the right. Do not tilt forward.

**Repeat 10 times.**



### **Head, arms and trunk rotation:**

Start with feet hip width apart, hands and arms reaching directly forward at shoulder level. Turn your head, arms and shoulders around to the left as far as you can go, bending the right arm across the chest, keeping your hips still. Repeat to the right.

**Repeat 10 times.**

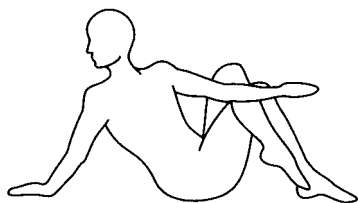


### **Bending forward:**

Stand with your feet hip width apart and your knees bent. Contracting your stomach muscles, slowly roll down as far as you can, but do not overstretch. Allow your arms to fall towards your feet. Gently straighten up to your starting position, using your hands to push yourself up if necessary.

**Repeat 10 times.**

## Flexibility Exercises – perform daily

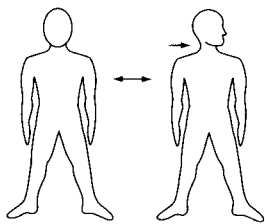


### **Trunk rotators:**

Sitting cross legged, twist your shoulders around and place your right hand on the floor behind you. Place your left arm outside of your right knee. Twist towards the right and hold for 5 seconds, using your left arm as a lever against the knee.

**Repeat 5 times to each side.**

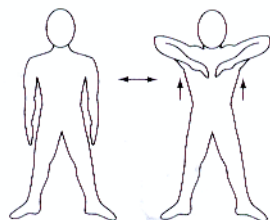
## Basic Neck and Upper Back Exercises – perform on alternate days while standing



### Lateral neck rotation:

Standing, feet hip width apart, rotate your neck to the left and then to the right with a slow, deliberate movement.

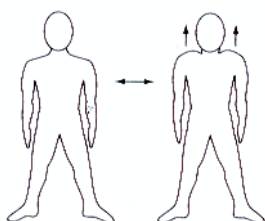
**Repeat 10 times on each side.**



### Upright rowing:

Standing with your feet hip width apart, arms at your sides, bring your hands up to just below your chin, at the same time bringing your elbows up as far as possible to the side of the head. Then return your arms to your sides. Breathe in on the way up, out on the way down.

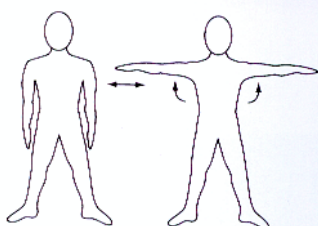
**Repeat 10 times.**



### Shrugs:

Standing with your feet hip width apart, arms at your sides, raise your shoulders as far as possible and lower slowly and deliberately. Breathe in on the way up, out on the way down.

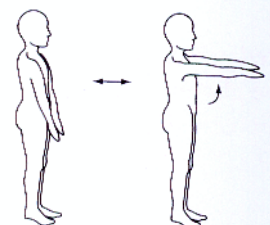
**Repeat 10 times**



### Lateral arm raises:

Standing with your feet hip width apart, arms at your sides, raise your arms to the side until parallel with the ground and return to the side slowly and deliberately. Breathe in on the way up, out on the way down.

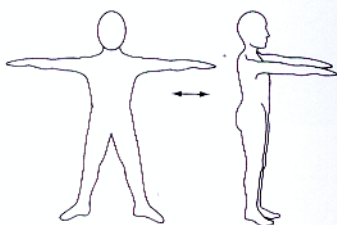
**Repeat 10 times.**



### Front arm raises:

Standing with your feet hip width apart, arms at your sides, bring your arms to the front until parallel with the ground and return to the side slowly and deliberately. Breathe in on the way up, out on the way down.

**Repeat 10 times.**

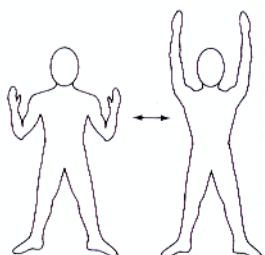


### Crucifix:

Standing with your feet hip width apart, arms extended to the sides parallel with the ground, move your arms to the front and return to the sides.

Breathe in on the way up, out on the way down using slow, deliberate movements.

**Repeat 10 times.**



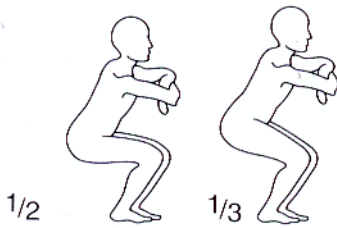
### Shoulder press:

Standing with your feet hip width apart, arms at your sides, place your hands beside your shoulders. Raise your arms upwards to their full extent then return your hands to beside your shoulders slowly and deliberately.

Breathe in on the way up, out on the way down.

**Repeat 10 times.**

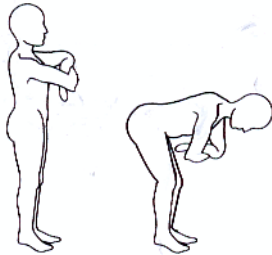
## Basic low back exercises – perform alternate days



### Half or one third squats:

Feet hip width apart, fold your arms in front of your chest at shoulder height. Bend your knees until your thighs are halfway down to being parallel with the ground (one third squats). Return to the upright position and progress to having your thighs parallel to the ground, but never deeper than a half squat. Breathe out on the way down, in on the way up.

**Repeat this 5 times and gradually increase to 10 times.**



### Good morning:

Standing with your feet hip width apart, fold your arms in front of your chest at shoulder height. Bend your knees a little and bend your hips to get your back flat parallel to the ground. Breathe out on the way down, in on the way up.

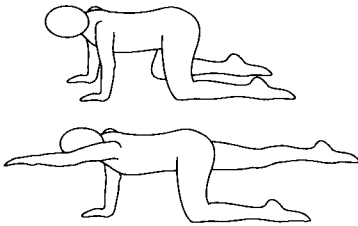
**Repeat 10 times**



### Back arch:

Lying face down on the floor, push up with your arms, hands placed below your shoulders. Keep your pelvis on the floor and only raise your back.

**Repeat 10 times.**



On the floor, on all fours, place your hands shoulder width apart and your knees slightly apart (your arms and thighs should be vertical). Stretch one arm forward in front, at the same time stretching the opposite leg out behind.

**Repeat 10 times**