

Low back pain? These exercises may help

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(HealthDay)—Low back pain is a common health complaint. And if it sidelines you for too long, it can lead to weight gain, a loss in your fitness level and keep you from doing things you love.

But not moving isn't the answer—specific exercises can help you get back to everyday activities. If you're under the care of an orthopedist or physical therapist, you may be given a series of exercises to do up to three times a day.

Here are three in particular that may help.

Tummy contractions. Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor hip-width apart, and your hands on your tummy below your ribcage. Tighten your abs—it should feel as though your ribcage is being pressed toward your back. Hold for five seconds, then relax. Repeat 10 times.

Knee-to-chest stretch. Begin in the same starting position, but for this [exercise](#), place both hands on the back of your left thigh and gently pull the [knee](#) to your chest. Hold for 20 seconds, then relax. Repeat five times with the left leg, then switch to the right leg and repeat the entire sequence.

Body stretch sequence. Sit on a large exercise ball with knees bent at a 90-degree angle to the floor. Move your feet slightly out to the sides for balance. First, lift your left arm straight up over your head, then lower it and repeat with the right arm; alternate five times. Next, slowly raise and lower your left [heel](#), then slowly raise and lower your right heel; alternate five times. Finally, raise your left arm overhead and your right heel off the floor at the same time, lower them and reverse, raising your right arm overhead and lifting your left heel off the floor; alternate five times.

Another type of exercise that may help is yoga. According to a study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, people who took a weekly class designed for those with low back [pain](#) were helped just as much as those who did traditional physical therapy, and needed less pain medication over time.

More information: The University of California, Berkeley, has detailed information on low back pain and [more exercises](#) that can help ease it.

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