

Exercises for a Healthier Back and Neck



Treat Exercise With Respect

The following pages will present helpful exercises for your neck and back.

While exercise has its therapeutic benefits, it can have a reverse effect if not done with care and good judgment. It is best to follow a program outlined by your doctor of chiropractic which allows him to professionally monitor your progress.

Following are some important points to remember.

1. Wear clothes that will not impede or restrict your movements in any direction. Sweatsuits, leotards or loose clothing are best.
2. It is essential that you allow a "warm-up" period before engaging in an exercise session. Allow the muscles to loosen up before embarking on strenuous exercise by beginning each exercise session with a stretching routine. Mild heat or a hot tub soak for five to ten minutes just before starting can help relax tight muscles.
3. Start by doing the movements slowly and carefully. As you gain confidence and strength, you may increase the speed along with the frequency, but speed is not essential! It is important to maintain a balanced breathing cycle with each exercise, inhaling and exhaling in rhythm.
4. Don't over-exercise, especially at the beginning. Do only the amount recommended by your doctor of chiropractic. Do *only* the exercises your doctor has recommended and in the order advised.
5. Floor exercises should be done on a firm, padded surface, such as a carpeted floor. If it is difficult getting down and up from the floor initially, a firm bed might be preferred. A small pillow under the head is sometimes more comfortable.
6. Exercise *every* day according to the routine recommended by your doctor of chiropractic. Do not skip a day and then try to make it up with heavier exercise. Sporadic exercising can be harmful.
7. If you feel slight discomfort during your exercises, do not become alarmed. This should disappear as your muscles become stronger and more conditioned to the routine. However, pain or discomfort should not persist. If it does, stop the routine and consult your doctor of chiropractic.
8. **IMPORTANT:** Follow directions precisely. It is important to avoid doing any type of exercise other than those recommended, particularly if you're recovering from a back or neck ailment, so as to avoid possible further injury.

Exercises to Rehabilitate and Strengthen the Low Back

CAUTION
No exercise program should be undertaken without the approval, instruction and monitoring of your doctor or chiropractic.

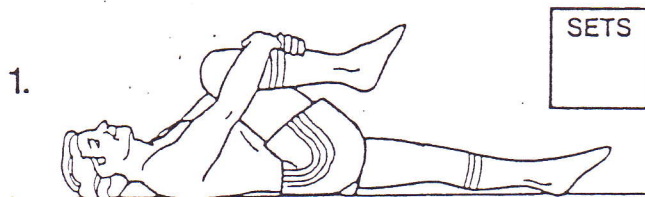
Most low back pain patients experience three general stages before maximum recovery and rehabilitation is obtained:

1. Stage 1 — Acute/Pain Stage
2. Stage 2 — Subacute/Recovery Stage
3. Stage 3 — Chronic/Rehabilitative Stage

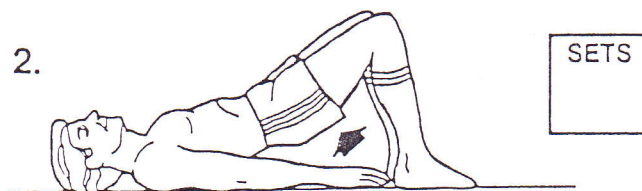
Stage 1 — Acute Pain Stage (Signs and Symptoms)

- Low back pain
- Hip pain
- Leg pain
- Splinting muscle spasm
- Antalgic (bent) posture
- Muscle weakness
- Inability to stand on heels or toes
- Aggravated by sitting, standing, bending, coughing, sneezing, straining
- Difficulty in rising from a sitting or lying position

Exercises — Acute/Pain Stage



1. Lie flat on the floor in a relaxed position. Bring your right knee toward your chest, clasping your hands around the knee. Pull your right knee toward your chest firmly and, at the same time, forcefully straighten the left leg. Hold for three to five seconds. Relax tension. Do five times. Repeat same procedure with opposite leg. Repeat five times or as recommended.



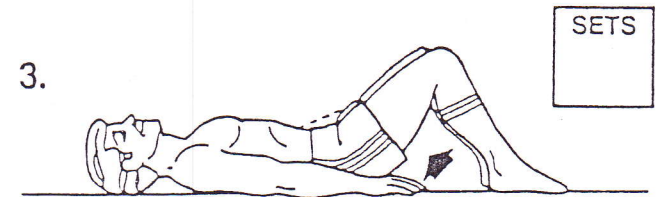
2. Lie on the floor with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor and arms at your sides, palms down. Tighten the muscles of your lower abdomen and buttocks so as to flatten your low back. Slowly raise low back and buttocks from the floor and hold for five seconds. Relax. Do five times or as recommended.

Stage 2 — Subacute Recovery Stage

This stage is when the majority of your signs and symptoms from the acute stage have subsided. You may continue to experience a dull, aching sensation in your low back, hips or legs, and possibly have a weak feeling in the low back or a general feeling of apprehension. Standing straight, sitting and rising should be performed without pain. Sneezing and straining should not aggravate or cause you to have acute symptoms.

Stage 3 — Chronic Rehabilitative Stage

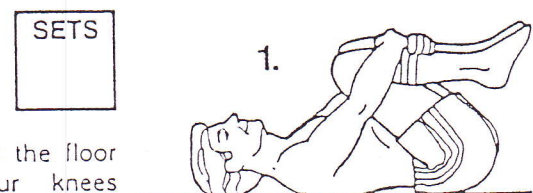
You will reach this stage when all of your symptoms of the acute and subacute have subsided, or where maximum improvement in your condition has been obtained, and where long-term strengthening of the low back is absolutely essential.



3. Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor, hands at your sides, palms down. Tighten the muscles of your abdomen and buttocks so as to push your low back flat against the floor. Hold for three to five seconds, relax. Do five times or as recommended.

Exercises — Subacute/Recovery Stage

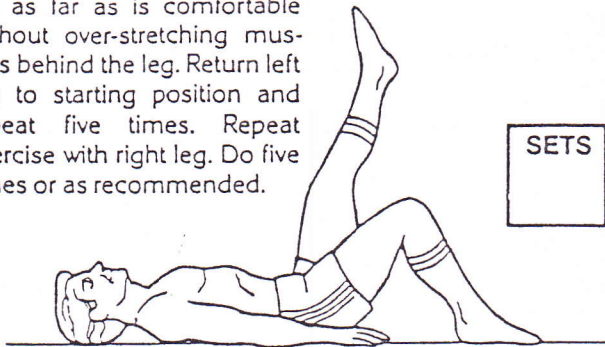
(These exercises are to be performed in addition to those suggested during the acute stage.)



1. Lie on the floor with your knees bent, feet on the floor and arms at your sides. Bring both knees to chest, clasping hands around the knees and pulling firmly towards your chest. Hold for three to five seconds. Relax tension. Do five times or as recommended.

2. Lie on your back, your knees bent with feet flat on the floor, arms at your sides, palms down. Raise your left leg up as far as is comfortable without over-stretching muscles behind the leg. Return left leg to starting position and repeat five times. Repeat exercise with right leg. Do five times or as recommended.

2.



SETS

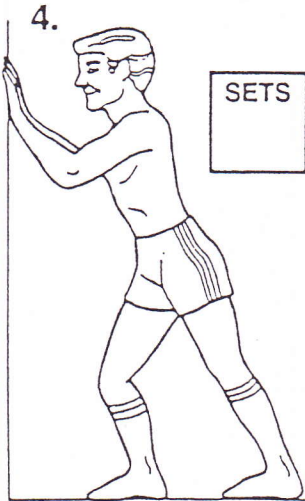
3.



SETS

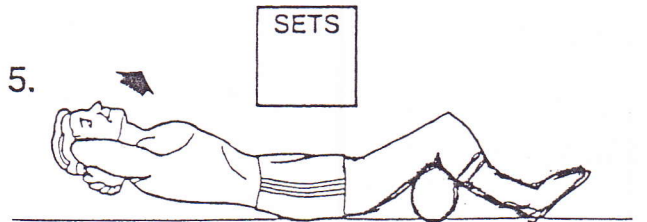
3. Lie flat on your back, arms at your sides, palms down. Slowly raise one leg, bringing the raised leg toward the opposite side of the body until you feel the stretch. Return to neutral position. Repeat with opposite leg. Do five times or as recommended.

4. Standing with hands against wall, left foot approximately eighteen inches behind right foot, keeping heel flat on the floor and left knee straight, slowly bend forward until you feel the stretch behind the calf. Hold for three to five seconds, release the tension and repeat three to five times. Repeat with the opposite leg. This exercise is designed to release tension behind calf.



SETS

5.



SETS

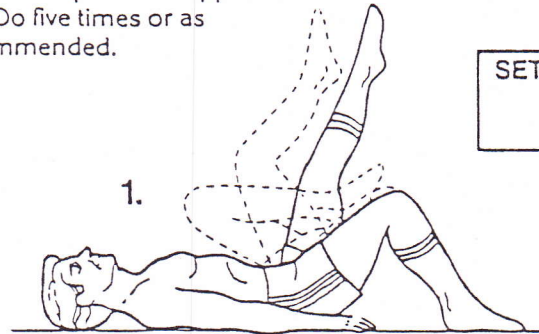
5. Lie flat on floor, hands clasped behind the neck. Tighten buttocks and at the same time, lift head and shoulders 2-4 inches off the floor without pulling on the neck. Hold for three to five seconds, return to neutral position. Repeat five times or as recommended. This exercise is mainly an abdominal strengthening exercise. BEND KNEES!

Exercises — Chronic/Rehabilitative Stage

(These exercises are to be performed in addition to those suggested during the acute and subacute stages.)

1. Lie on your back, with both knees bent, feet flat on the floor. Bring one knee to the chest, then straighten it to the vertical position, pointing the toe upward as far as possible. Bend knee back to chest and return to original position. Repeat with opposite leg. Do five times or as recommended.

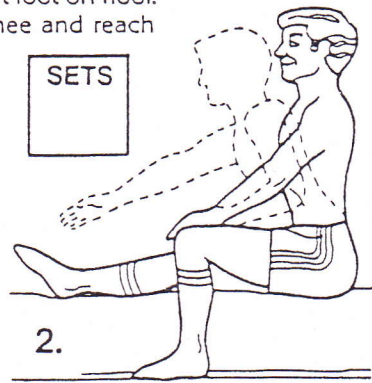
1.



SETS

2. Sit sideways on couch, stretch out right leg flat and put left foot on floor. Put left hand on left knee and reach forward with your right hand for the toes of the right foot. Reach as far forward as you can without discomfort. Feel the stretch behind the right leg, hold for three to five seconds and lean back to release the tension. Repeat with same leg five times, then change position and repeat with opposite leg.

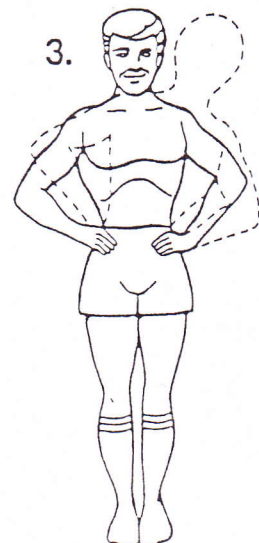
SETS



2.

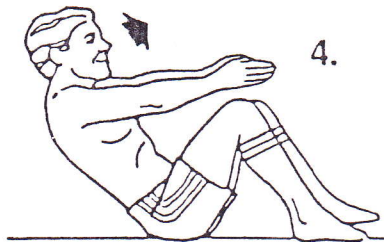
3. Standing with hands on hips, bend slowly to one side, bending only at the waist. Do not flex hip or knee. Hold for three to five seconds. Return to neutral position and repeat to opposite side. Do five times or as recommended.

3.



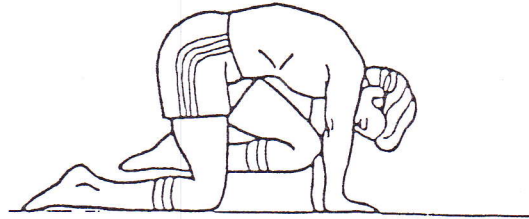
SETS

4. Lie on back, knees bent, feet flat on floor, hands on chest. It would be helpful to put the feet under a heavy chair or sofa for support or have someone hold the feet to the floor. Sit up to one quarter the sitting position and hold for three to five seconds. Relax. Repeat five times or as recommended.



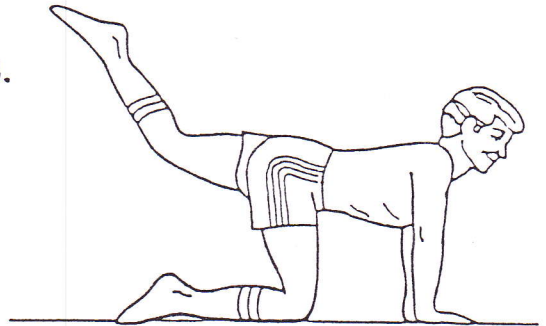
SETS

4.



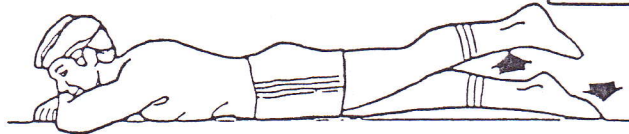
SETS

8.



8. On hands and knees, draw one knee toward chest, flexing trunk and neck at same time. Then swing leg back to the outstretched position, extending neck and back at same time. Do five times or as recommended. Repeat with other leg.

5.



SETS

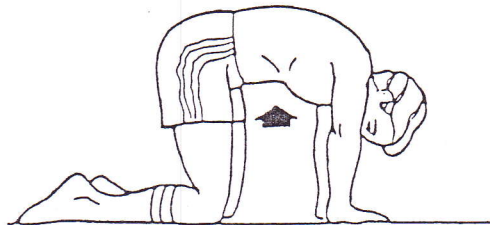
5. Lie face down on floor with large pillow under the hips and lower part of the abdomen. Lift one leg from the floor, keeping leg straight, hold for three seconds and relax. Repeat using other leg. Do five times or as recommended.

6.



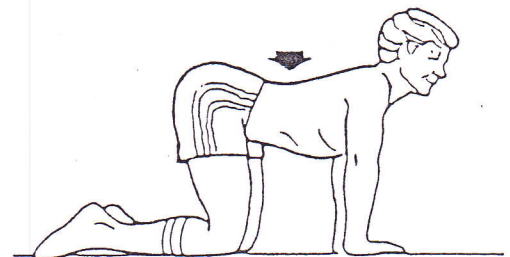
SETS

6. Lie face down on floor with a large pillow under the hips and lower part of the abdomen. Place hands behind the hips and lift the head and shoulders from the floor being cautious *not* to raise high enough to cause pain in lower back or create swayback. Resume resting position. Repeat five times or as recommended.



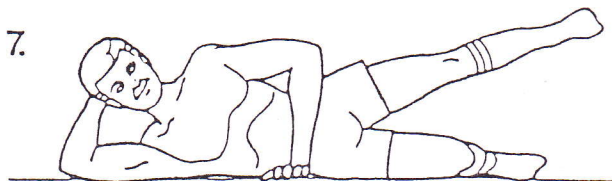
SETS

9.



9. Assume a kneeling position, resting on your hands and knees. Arch your back like a cat, drop your head at the same time. Then reverse the arch by bringing up your head and forming a "U" with your spine. Do each set five times or as recommended.

7.



SETS

7. Lie on your right side, raise left leg to as near a vertical position as possible, repeat five to ten times. Repeat lying on left side and raising right leg.

Exercises to Strengthen the Neck

CAUTION
No exercise program should be undertaken without the approval, instruction and monitoring of your doctor of chiropractic.

The following is a group of isometric exercises designed to strengthen your neck muscles. If the procedure causes pain, it is recommended you use less force and reduce the number of repetitions. As you gain strength in the neck, you should be able to increase both the force and number of times you are able to perform the exer-

cises. Do *not* use any additional weight or devices in neck exercises. An application of moist heat before you start will aid in performance. When doing exercises, do not hold your breath. Check with your doctor before you begin neck exercises.

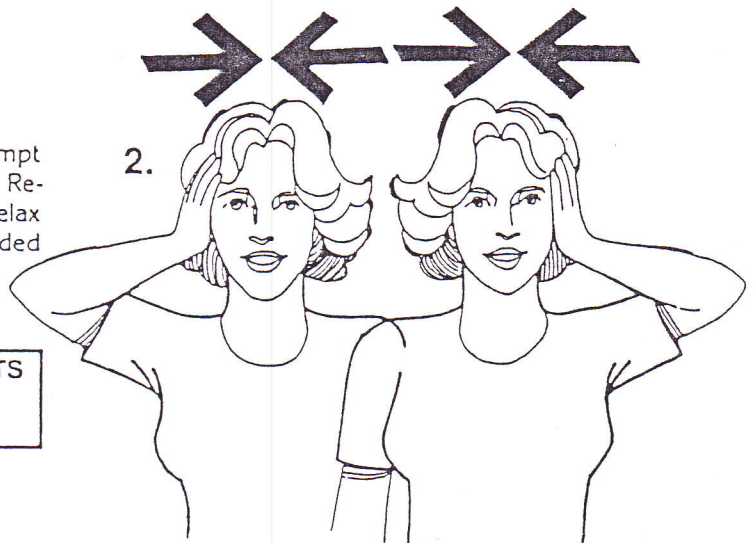


1.

1. Press your palms against your forehead and push against each other, resisting motion. Hold for 5 seconds, relax slowly. Do exercise three times. Repeat as recommended by your doctor of chiropractic.

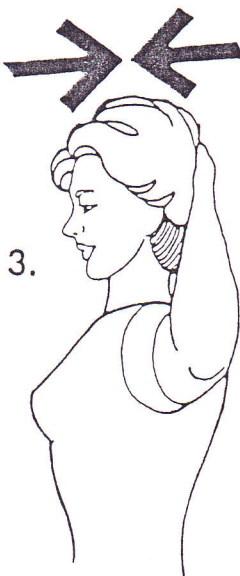
SETS

2. Place your hand against the side of your head. Attempt to bring your ear to your shoulder, resisting motion. Repeat exercise on opposite side. Hold for 5 seconds, relax slowly. Do exercise three times. Repeat as recommended by your doctor of chiropractic.



2.

SETS



3.

3. Cup both hands against the back of your head. Try to push your head back, resisting motion. Hold for 5 seconds, relax slowly. Do exercise three times. Repeat as recommended by your doctor of chiropractic.

SETS

SETS

4. Place your right hand against your right temple. Attempt to turn your chin to your right shoulder, resisting motion. Repeat exercise on opposite side. Hold for 5 sec-



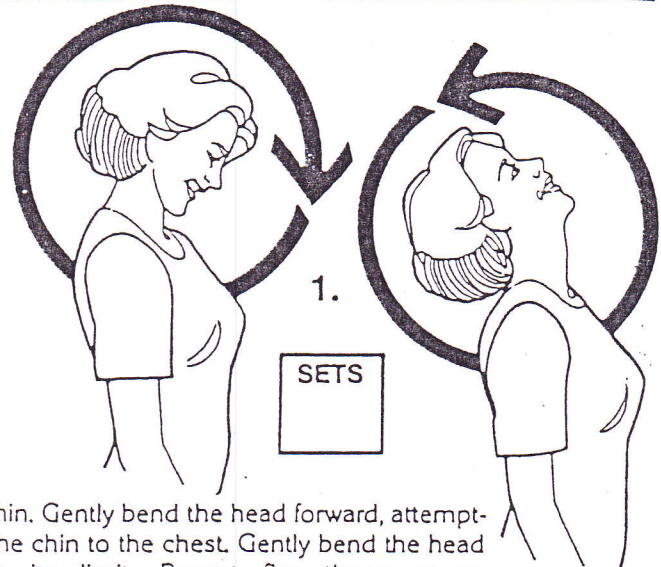
4.

Exercises to Stretch and Restore Range of Motion to the Neck

CAUTION

No exercise program should be undertaken without the approval, instruction and monitoring of your doctor or chiropractic.

The following is a group of mobilizing and stretching exercises designed to increase the range of motion in your cervical spine (neck). If the exercise causes pain or any symptoms such as light headedness or dizziness, it is recommended that you discontinue these exercises and consult your doctor. As you gain mobility in the neck you should notice greater movement and less stiffness. Do not use any additional weights or devices when doing these exercises. An application of moist heat before you start will aid in your performance.



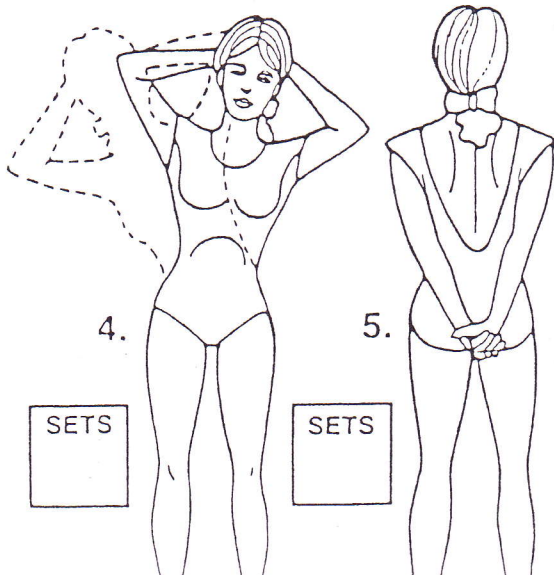
1. Tuck your chin. Gently bend the head forward, attempting to touch the chin to the chest. Gently bend the head backwards to its limit. Repeat five times or as recommended.



2. Bend the head to the right as far as possible, attempting to touch ear to shoulder. Do not rotate head in this exercise. Bend the head to the left as far as possible, attempting to touch ear to shoulder. Repeat five times or as recommended.



3. Turn head to the right as far as possible, attempting to bring chin over shoulder. Do not elevate shoulder. Hold three to five seconds. Repeat on opposite side. Do five times or as recommended.



4. Standing with feet apart, place hands behind head. Bend from side to side, bending only with the upper back. Do not bend the waist or hips. Attempt to reach the upper elbow to the ceiling. Hold each movement for three to five seconds. Alternate sides. Do five times or as recommended.

5. Standing with feet apart, clasping hands behind the back, pull downward toward the floor with hands. Take a deep breath, stand on toes and look at the ceiling while exerting the downward pull. Hold for three to five sec-