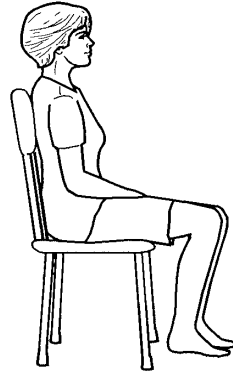


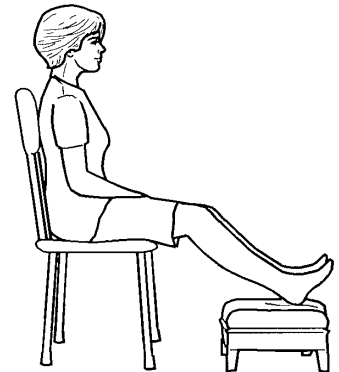
# Do's and Don'ts with Low Back Pain

## Sitting

- **Do:** Sit as little as possible and then only for short periods.
- **Do:** Place a supportive towel roll at the belt line of the back especially when sitting in a car.
- **Do:** When getting up from sitting, keep the normal curves in your back. Move to the front of the seat and stand up by straightening your legs. Avoid bending forward at the waist.
- **Do:** Try to keep the normal curves in your back at all times.
- **Do not:** Do not sit on a low soft couch with a deep seat. It will force you to sit with your hips lower than your knees and will round your back. You will lose the normal curve in your back.
- **Do not:** Do not place your legs straight out in front of you while sitting. (e.g. sitting in the bath tub).



**Good**



**Bad**

## Standing

- **Do:** If you must stand for a long period of time, keep one leg up on a foot stool.
- **Do:** Adapt work heights.
- **Do not:** Avoid half bent positions.



**Good**



**Bad**

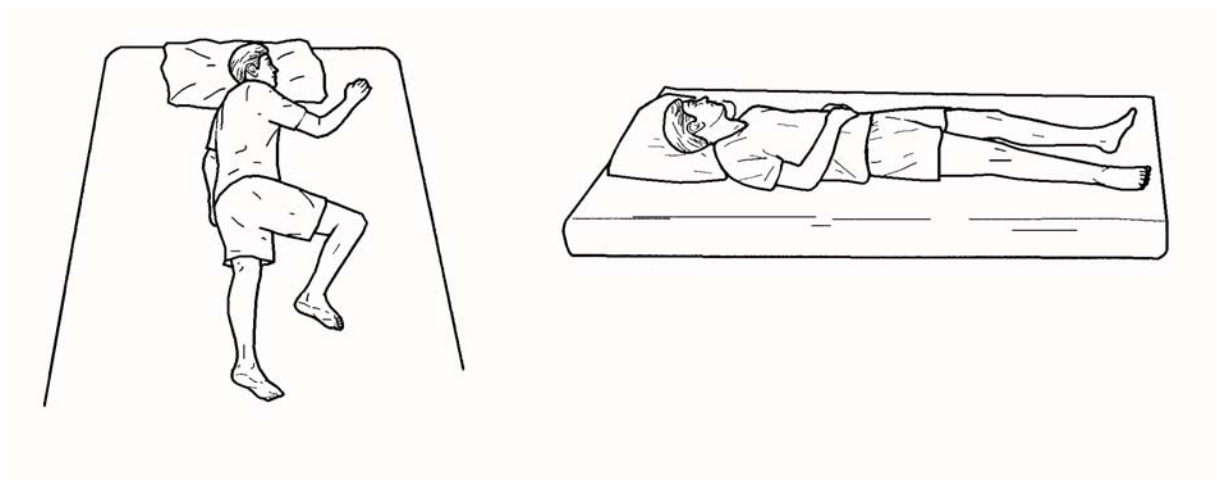
## ☞ Lifting

- **Do:** Avoid lifting altogether, if you can.
- **Do:** Use the correct lifting technique. Keep your back straight when lifting. Never stoop or bend forward. Stand close to the load, have a firm footing and wide stance. Kneel on one knee, keeping the back straight. Have a secure grip on the load and lift by straightening your knees. Do a steady lift and do not jerk. Shift your feet to turn and do not twist your back.



## ☞ Lying

- **Do:** Sleep on a good firm surface.
- **Do:** If your bed sags, use slats or plywood supports between the mattress and base to firm it. You also can place the mattress on the floor, a simple but temporary solution.
- **Do:** You may be more comfortable at night when you use a supportive roll. A rolled up towel behind your waist is usually helpful.
- **Do not:** Do not sleep on your stomach.



**Good Positions while Lying**

### ☞ **Bending Forward**

- **Do:** Keep the natural curves of your back by kneeling. (e.g. when making a bed, vacuuming, cleaning the floor or weeding the garden)

**Good**



**Bad**



### ☞ **Coughing and Sneezing**

- **Do:** Bend backwards to increase the curve of your back while you cough or sneeze.

### ☞ **Driving a Car**

- **Do:** Drive the car as little as possible. It is better to be a passenger than to drive yourself.
- **Do:** Move the seat forward to the steering wheel. Your seat must be close enough to the wheel to keep the natural curves of your back. If your hips are lower than your knees in this position, raise yourself by sitting on a pillow.

## **Exercises for Low Back Pain**

### ☞ **Centralization:**

- The closer the pain is to your spine, the better. (e.g. the pain is better in your knee than in your foot).
- An increase in your low back pain can be expected. This is acceptable as long as your leg symptoms are not increasing.

### ☞ **Stop the exercise and let your doctor or therapist know right away if you have either of these problems:**

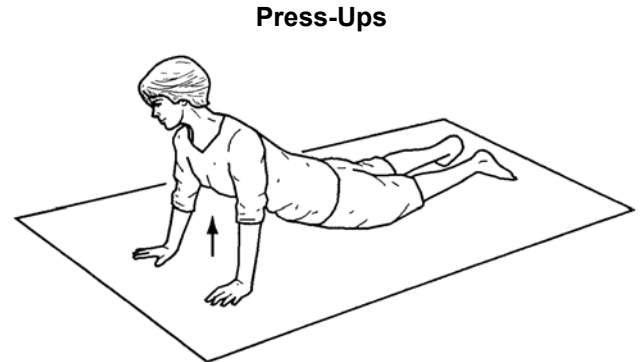
- any change in your bowel or bladder control.
- any increase in weakness in your leg or foot.

### ☞ **If Your Pain Returns:**

- Adjust your posture.
- If no improvement, begin your exercises.

### ☐ Press-Ups:

Keep your back and buttocks relaxed and use your arms to press up. Concentrate on keeping your hips down and push up your upper body as high as possible.



### ☐ Double Knee to Chest:

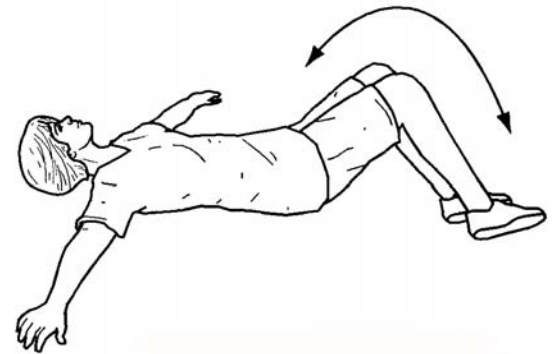
Grasp both your knees with your hands and pull toward your shoulders. Hold the stretch for 1 second. Let your knees return, but keep them bent at arms length.



**Double Knee to Chest**

### ☐ Lumbar Spine Stretches:

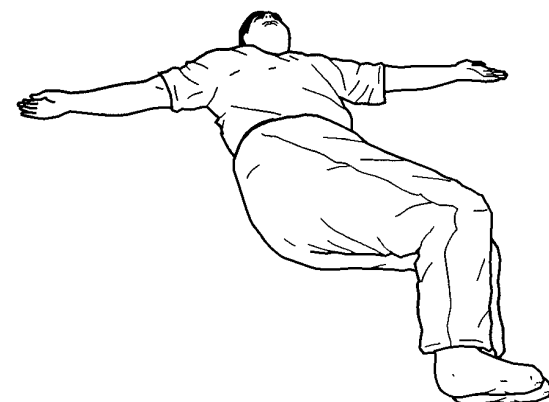
Lie on your back. Bring your knees towards your chest. Rotate your knees towards the pain.



**Lumbar Spine Stretches**

### ☐ Sidelying Rotation

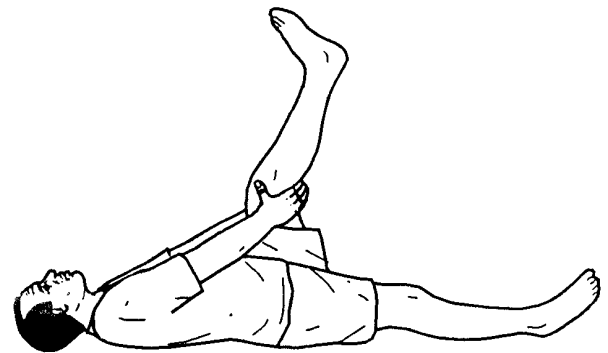
Lie on your side and face forward. Have both arms straight in front and bend your knees. Turn your head as you move your top arm across your body as far as you can. Keep your arm in place and turn your head back to the starting position. Look back again and turn your head farther if you can. Bring your head and arm back to the starting position. Relax and repeat 10 times on each side.



**Sidelying Rotation**

**❑ Hamstring Stretch**

Lie on your back with your legs out straight. Raise your leg up and put your hands around the upper leg for support. Slowly straighten the raised knee until you feel a stretch in the back of the upper leg. Hold, then relax and repeat 10 times on each leg .



**Hamstring Stretch**

**❑ Standing Arch:**

Stand with your feet apart and hands on the small of your back with fingers pointing backwards. Bend backwards at the waist, supporting the trunk with your hands. Keep your knees straight. Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.



**Standing Arch**

**❑ Side Glides:**

Stand at a right angle to the wall about 2 feet out from the wall. Lean your shoulder into the wall. Move your hips toward the wall, keeping your legs together and your knees straight. Return to the starting position.



**Slide Glides**

**If you would like more written information, please call the Center for Health Information at (614)293-3707. You can also make the request by e-mail: [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).**

© Copyright, (1/2003)  
Department of Rehabilitation Services  
The Ohio State University Medical Center

- ▶ Upon request all patient education handouts are available in other formats for people with special hearing, vision and language needs, call (614) 293-3191.