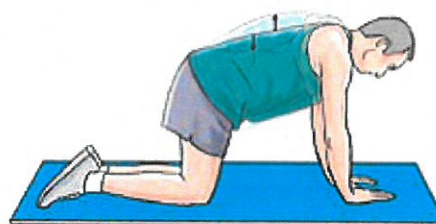


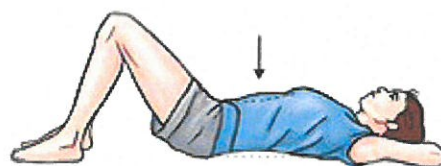
Low Back Pain Exercises



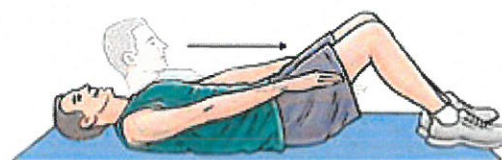
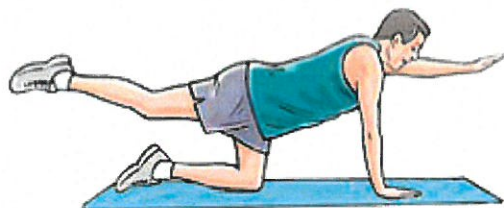
Standing hamstring stretch



Cat and camel



Pelvic tilt



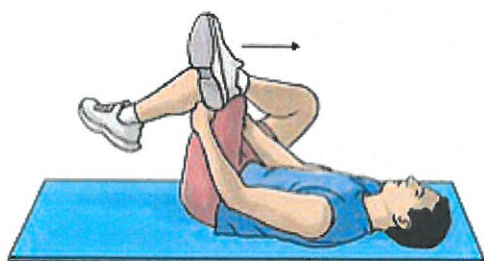
Partial curl



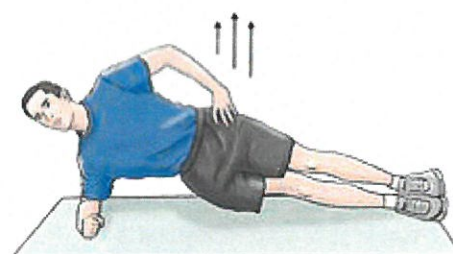
Quadruped arm/leg raise



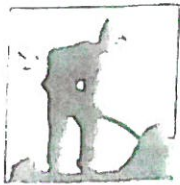
Extension exercise



Gluteal stretch



Side plank



BACK PAIN

If your back hurts, you've got plenty of company. As many as four out of five Americans eventually suffer from backaches, mainly because we sit too long, worry too much, and exercise too little.

Fortunately, you can eliminate most of your back problems simply by changing a few bad habits. Here are some suggestions to help you get your back on track.

When the Pain Begins

If your back starts to hurt, stop whatever you're doing and give it a rest. Lie on your side with your knees drawn up or on your back with a pillow under bent knees. Apply a heating pad or an ice pack. Aspirin or ibuprofen may help at this point; a doctor may prescribe stronger pain medicine, anti-inflammatory drugs, or muscle relaxants. Gentle massage may provide some short-term relief. Please note, however: Some symptoms—such as tingling, numbness, weakness, bowel or bladder problems—might require a doctor's immediate attention.

Don't stay in bed longer than necessary. Most doctors now believe that prolonged inactivity can delay your recovery. As soon as you're able, gradually move into a gentle exercise routine, like the one listed on the back of this card.

Back to Health

Changing some basic habits can relieve your back pain and prevent it from returning.

STAY LOOSE. To avoid stiffness, don't stay in any one position for too long. Since sitting tends to put more strain on your back than standing, it's especially important to get up out of your chair and stretch or walk around every half hour or so. If you stand all day, shift your weight frequently from one foot to the other or find a raised step or low stool to rest one foot on.

SIT PROPERLY. Use a chair with adjustable seat height and back tilt. You should be able to relax your shoulders and neck. Prop your feet on a footrest so that your knees are higher than your thighs. You may find it comfortable to put a pillow or rolled-up towel behind your lower

back. If you do a lot of desk work, a drafting table or slanted surface may help you to sit erect with minimal strain on your back.

MINIMIZE DRIVING. As most truck drivers can tell you, the back suffers from long hours behind the wheel. When you drive, sit close to the steering wheel so that you don't have to stretch your legs (and thus overarch your back) to reach the pedals. Stop every two hours to stretch or walk. Support your spine with an orthopedic backrest or a cushion behind your lower back.

STAY FIT. Regular exercise keeps the muscles that support the spine in shape, and strong leg muscles will help you lift heavy loads without injuring your back. Also, a strong abdomen reduces pressure on the back. Use the back-strengthening routine on this card coupled with an aerobic fitness activity such as swimming or brisk walking. Any repetitive physical activity can aggravate a bad back if it's performed too fast, too long, or too strenuously, so pay attention to how your back responds.

LEFT AND CARRY CAREFULLY. Bend your knees, not your back. Squat next to the object, hold it close to you, and push up with your legs. Don't jerk or lunge, and don't lift heavy loads over your head. If you carry a load in each hand, try to balance the weights. The best way to carry heavy loads is in a knapsack on your back. Avoid carrying heavy shoulder bags.

SLEEP RIGHT, SLEEP TIGHT. Lie on your back with a pillow under bent knees or on your side with knees drawn up and a pillow between them. To get out of bed, don't sit straight up. Turn onto your side and push yourself up with your arms.

STRAIGHTEN UP. Erect posture helps to relieve some of the weight on your spine. When you stand, keep your feet parallel and slightly separated. Pull in your abdomen, keep your shoulders down and back, and breathe freely.

STOP SMOKING. Smoking seems to make people more susceptible to back pain. It may be because a smoker's cough stresses the muscles.

RELAX. Insist on taking time out for activities that make you feel healthy and relieve emotional stress.