

Exercise:

If you do not exercise regularly it is unlikely that you will notice a long term change in your pain. You have to exercise to regain and maintain your mobility and strength. You will need to continue with the exercises for the rest of your life to keep the muscles functioning at their best. If we are not using our muscles they become weak and we are at risk for more problems.

Exercise Guidelines:

- The exercises below are divided into stretching and strengthening exercises.
- Do not perform any exercises that increase your pain for more than 2 hours after you are done. It is normal to have some muscle soreness after starting the exercises because you are using the muscles differently.
- Perform 1-3 sets of each exercise at least 5-7 days per week.
- The exercises should not aggravate your back pain!
- Apply ice if you are achy after the exercise.

If there is no change in your pain after 1-2 weeks call the Physical Therapy Department at (510) 248-3200 for an appointment. You do not need to call your doctor first.

Stretching Guidelines:

- Stretch for 5 to 10 minutes total
 - Hold each stretch 30 seconds
 - Relax 10 seconds in between
- Stretch gently
- Feel the stretch in the muscle
- Avoid pain or discomfort (during or after the stretching)
- Repeat 2 times each day

Knee to Chest



Lie on your back, and gently pull your knee toward your chest. If you are having trouble reaching your knee, you can wrap a towel around the back of your thigh and pull on the towel. Repeat on the other side.

Knee to Opposite Chest



Lie on your back and pull your knee toward the opposite shoulder. Repeat on the other side.

Knees Side to Side



Lie on your back with your knees bent. Keep your knees together and slowly move your knees to the left as far as comfortable. Repeat to the right.

Slowly rock back and forth for 30 seconds

Hamstrings



Lie on your back with your knees bent. Place a towel or your hands behind the leg you want to stretch. Straighten your knee until you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh.

**To progress straighten the opposite leg.

Strengthening Guidelines:

- Start with 10 repetitions and build up to 20
- Hold each position for 5 seconds
- Start with 2 sets and work up to 3 sets of each exercise
- Exercise 4 to 5 times per week
- Avoid pain or discomfort (during or after the strengthening exercises)

Pelvic tilt



Lie on your back with your knees bent. Gently flatten your back into the bed or floor.

Bridging



Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor, hands by your sides. Lift your hips off the floor without arching your back then slowly lower your hips.

4 Point Arm



Lift one arm and reach forward. Keep abdominal and buttock muscles tight. Do not let your back move.

Slowly Lower your arm. Repeat with other arm alternating sides.

4 Point Leg



Slide one leg backwards until the knee is off the ground. Keep abdominal and buttock muscles tight. Do not let your back move.

Slowly lower to the knee down. Repeat with the other leg, alternating sides.

Mini Squat



Stand with feet shoulder width apart. Slowly squat taking hips backward, bending your knees and hips. **Do not let your knees go past your toes.**

Consult with your physical therapist or doctor if you experience an increase in your symptoms with recommended exercises, or if you develop new symptoms of numbness, tingling, or a spread of the pain. This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult your doctor.