

# Physiotherapist Dan Jones answers your questions



**Q** I recently slipped on ice during the cold snap and jarred my back. Since then I have had soreness and stiffness in my low back, that seems slow to settle. Are there any exercises that I can do to help ease the stiffness and pain. Jayne, Rhiwbina.

**A** Exercises that stretch and strengthen the muscles of your abdomen and spine can help prevent ongoing back problems. If your back and abdominal muscles are strong, it will help you to maintain good posture and support your spine in its correct position. Warm up your muscles with light aerobic activity like brisk walking before doing any strengthening or stretching. Stop doing any exercise that causes pain until you have talked with your health care provider.

The exercises are intended only as suggestions. Ask a health care provider or chartered physiotherapist to help develop a specific exercise program for your needs. **Caution:** If you have a herniated disk or previous disk problem, please check with your health care provider before doing these exercises.

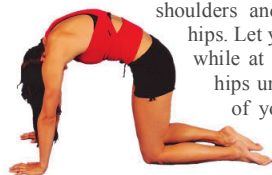
## Pelvic tilt

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Tighten your abdominal muscles and push your lower back into the floor. Hold this position for 5 seconds, and then relax. Repeat for 10 reps



## Cat Stretch

In a hands and knee position, place your hands under the shoulders and the knees under your hips. Let your head drop down while at the same time tuck your hips under and raise the middle of your back as high as you



can. You should try to create a gradual curve of your back towards the ceiling. Hold the position for 5 seconds and relax. Repeat 10 times.

## Lumbar Rotation

Lie on back, shoulders flat, knees bent, feet on floor. With knees together, slowly control your knees to one side, hold for 10 seconds, and repeat to opposite side. Repeat for 10 reps.



## Bridge

Lie face up with knees bent and hands at your sides. Slowly, uncurl your spine off the mat, one vertebrae at a time until you're in a bridge position, body in a straight line from knees to head. Arch up, squeezing your gluts, then lower back down by slowly uncurling the spine onto the mat. Repeat for 10 reps.



In addition to conditioning your back, you need to condition your whole body. Physical activities such as walking or swimming can help strengthen your back. It is always best to check with your health care provider before you start any rigorous exercise program.

Remember to begin slowly and grade your exercise. Good activities for people with back problems include:

- Walking
- Cycling
- Swimming
- Pilates
- Yoga

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