

Lumbar Exercises

1. The Bridge



**Hold for a
3 count,
then slowly
lower**



**Repeat 10
times**

2 Sets

30 seconds rest between sets

Purpose: This particular movement strengthens the buttocks and abdominals, which helps stabilize the trunk area and the lower back. This exercise also develops extra power for walking up hills and stairs.

Position: Lie on the floor with your back flat and knees bent. Your palms and feet should be kept flat for stability.

Action: Raise your buttocks slowly by contracting your abdominal and buttock muscles. Continue to rise to form a straight line from your shoulders to your knees. Do not over-extend your hips beyond that imaginary line. Hold for a 3 count, then slowly lower. Don't shift your head or tuck in your chin. That cuts off proper blood circulation. Perform 2 sets of 10 repetitions, with 30 seconds rest between sets.

Tip: An easy way to maintain a stationary head position is by spotting an object or a focal point on the ceiling.

2. Trunk Extensions



**Hold for 5 seconds,
then slowly lower**

2 sets

**Repeat 10 times
on each side**

**30 seconds
rest between
sets**

Purpose: This exercise strengthens the hard to reach muscles that run up and down either side of the spine in the back, the buttocks, and the back of your thighs. The muscles that lie close to your spinal column are essential to develop to maintain a strong and healthy back.

Position: Lie flat on your stomach with your arms extended forward (for comfort, a small towel can be placed under the forehead, but do not extend the neck).

Action: Tighten your buttocks and lift one arm and the opposite leg a few inches off the floor. Hold for 5 seconds and lower. Keep the leg close to the floor and your neck stationary throughout the exercise. Do not raise your hips as you raise your legs. Alternate sides, take each repetition slow, with controlled motions. Perform 2 sets with 10 repetitions each set.

Tip: Even though the movement in this exercise is small, the benefits are not. This is an excellent back strengthening exercise.

3. The Quadruped Extensions



**Hold for 5 seconds,
then slowly lower**

2 sets

**Repeat 10 times
on each side**

**30 seconds
rest between
sets**

Purpose: This exercise strengthens the back, buttocks and back of thighs. It also develops balance, enabling you to move your arms and legs freely while maintaining a stationary back position. (Your muscles on both sides of you flex and extend to maintain your balance. If your abdominal muscles stopped working, you would collapse to one side. There is a constant balancing act going on which strengthens your abdominal rotator muscles. Because your back is primarily supported by your abdominal musculature, this exercise contains many benefits.)

Position: Start on your hands and knees with your back straight. For stability, place your hands shoulder width apart, and your knees separated hip width apart.

Action: Lift one arm straight out in front of you with your head facing down. Find a focal point. Maintain a flat back. Lift and straighten the opposite leg behind you and hold both arm and leg parallel to the floor for a count of 5. Lower slowly. Alternate sides. Do not arch your back at any time. Perform 2 sets of 10 repetitions.

Tip: That subtle shifting from right to left you are experiencing is normal. If you find it difficult to maintain your balance, lift either one arm or one leg at a time. Shortly, your balance will improve.

4. Back Extension



1

**Slowly
lift
straight
up then
slowly
lower**



2

**Repeat 10 times
2 sets**



**Modified Version: Hands behind
the neck for added resistance**

Purpose: This exercise strengthens the muscles that run up and down the full length of your spine. When the back muscles become strong and tone, the back becomes well supported, protected and aligned.

Position: Lie face down on your stomach. Place a folded towel under your forehead for support. Connect your hands behind your back.

Action: Slowly lift straight up and slowly lower. As you lift, keep your chin level. When executed correctly, your chin will slightly tuck into your chest. Avoid extending your neck back. Perform 2 sets of 10 repetitions.

Modified Version: Hands held behind the neck for added resistance.

Tip: To help execute correct technique, find a focal point at eye height, and raise and lower directly above that spot on the floor or mat.