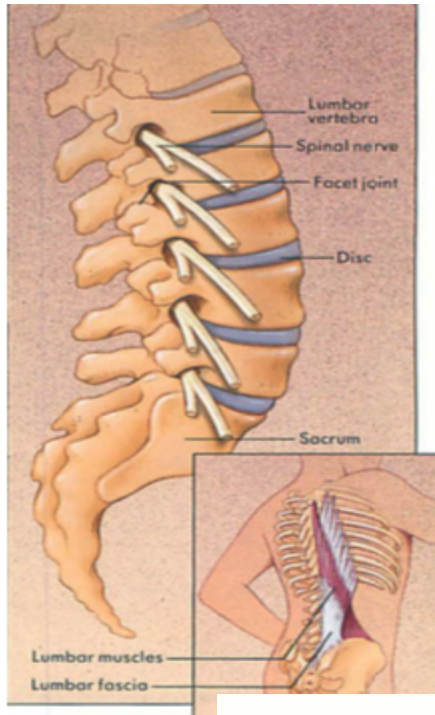




Low Back Disorders



Pain in the lower back is very common among both active and inactive people. It can stem from problems in the structure and function of the back (for example, in a joint, a disc, or connective tissue), it can come from conditions unrelated to the back (pregnancy, head injuries, or diseased organs)

Most back pain is caused by one or more of the following: facet joint syndrome, disc degeneration, or overloaded connective tissue.

Treatment

Treatment for low back pain may consist of several (not necessarily all) of the following.

Bed Rest: Total bed rest (firm mattress) may be necessary for severe back problems. Either lie on your back with a pillow placed lengthwise under both your knees and your calves or lie on your side with knees pulled up to your chest and a pillow held lengthwise between your calves.



Ice, Heat and Massage: To reduce the pain of early-on muscle spasm, use ice and/or light massage. To reduce later stiffness, apply moist heat (ie baths, whirlpool.)

Medicine: Depending on the problem, your doctor may prescribe an analgesic, aspirin, NSAID, or a muscle relaxant (for spasm)

Surgery: Is sometimes required; however, more conservative treatments like those listed above usually can eliminate the pain. Surgery is used to relieve nerve pressure from a herniated disc or to rest a segment of the back by fusion- but only after conservative measures have failed.

Change your Lifestyle:

Avoid heavy lifting when you bend down to pick things up, keep back straight and knees bent. Avoid bending over for a long time or rounding the back continually and losing the natural inward curve that creates a hollow in the low back. The natural curve you need to keep is called lordosis.

If restoring lordosis increases pain, stop bending backwards and see your physician.

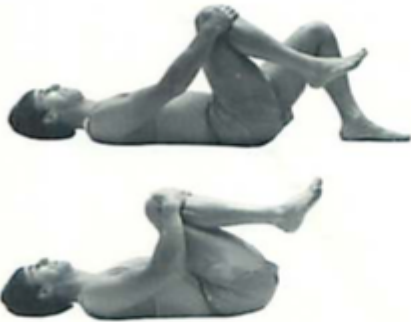
Exercises

The Pelvic Tilt.

Lie flat on your back (or stand with your back to a wall), knees bent, feet flat on floor, body relaxed. Tighten abdominal muscles and tilt pelvis so that the curve of the small of the back is flat on the floor (or wall). Tighten buttocks muscles. Hold ten seconds and then relax.



Repeat _____ times, _____ times/day.



Knee Raise.

Lie flat on your back, knees bent, feet flat on floor. Do a pelvic tilt (see above) and raise your knees slowly to your chest one at a time as shown. Hug knees gently, then lower your bent legs one at a time. Do not straighten your knees.

Repeat _____ times, _____ times/day.

Partial Press-up. First, lie face down on a soft, firm surface with your arms and head positioned as shown. Rest for a few minutes, relaxing completely. Second, staying in the same basic position, raise your upper body enough to lean on your elbows. Let your lower back and your legs relax as much as you can. Hold this position for 30 seconds at first, gradually working up to five minutes.



Repeat _____ times, _____ times/day.