

If these stretches or exercises cause any sharp pain, or aggravate your lower back for longer than a day afterwards, stop, follow the ice advise and contact the clinic.

Stretches

Stretches should only be held as long as you feel comfortable, or up to **30 seconds**, with at least **5-10 seconds rest** in between. **Do not bounce** at the end range as this may cause irritation.

Stretches can be repeated as many times as you need, however, if doing exercises and stretches, it is best to do the stretches after exercise as the muscles have warmed up. Be careful not to over stretch as this may also aggravate your pain you should only feel a 'nice' stretch and no sharp pain.

Knee to Chest

Starting Position: Lie on your back on the floor or bed.

Action: As shown pull one thigh towards your chest with the opposite leg flat. Hold as long as you feel comfortable or up to 30 seconds.

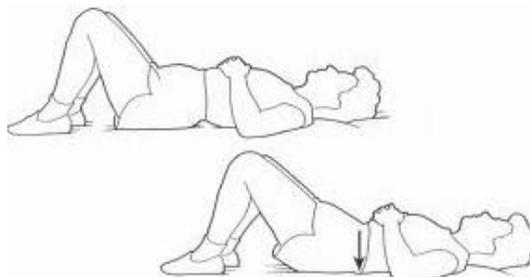
If you find this hard, just hug both knees into your chest and hold.



Pelvic Tilt

Starting Position: As above

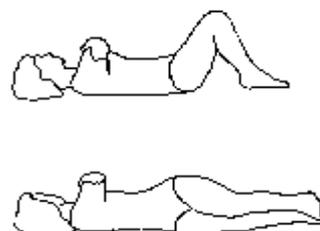
Action: Slowly push the small of your back into the floor/bed then gently arch your back. Repeat this motion 10 times or until the back starts to move with more ease.



Hip Rolling

Starting Position: As above, with both knees bent and feet flat. Your arms can either be out to the side, or across your chest.

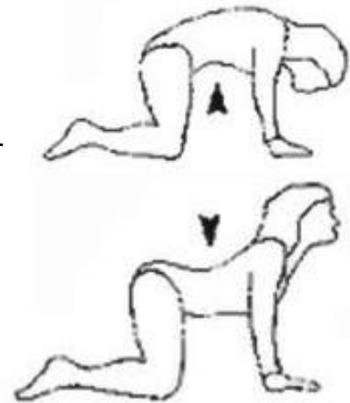
Action: Take both knees down slowly to the left. Allow your back to relax and knees to go down without force. Slowly straighten both legs and gently roll your onto your back. Walk you feet back up to the starting position and repeat on the other side.



Cat camel

Starting Position: Start on your hands and knees with your hands under your shoulders and your knees under your hips.

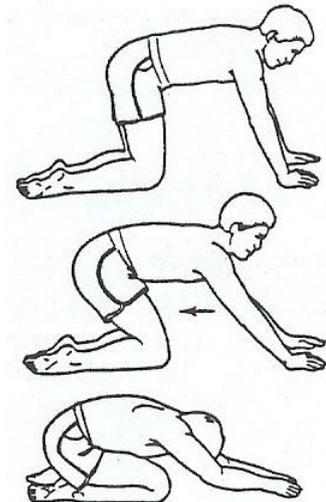
Action: Gently arch your back up and look down towards your knees. You should feel a nice pull in the mid back. This can then be reversed by lowering your stomach and looking up. Be careful as this **should not cause any sharp pain**, if it does you are arching too much too soon.



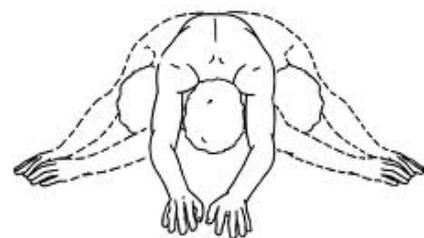
Swan Stretch (Lower and Mid back)

Starting Position: As above start on your hands and knees with your hands under your shoulders and your knees under your hips.

Action: Slowly move back to taking your buttocks towards your knees with your arms stretched out in front. Only go as far as is comfortable for your knees and back, and you feel a stretch.



Progression: If this becomes easy you can then modify it so that you walk the hands to either side in order to concentrate the stretch to one side or the other.



Hot and Cold Compress Advice

For moments of acute pain/injury (first few weeks) it is best to apply an **ice pack** (bag of frozen peas etc), this will slow blood flow and in turn reduce inflammation and pain, hour. **Heat** does the opposite (increases blood flow) and is good for chronic joint pain (arthritis) or muscular pain, using a hot water bottle or wheat bag. Both should be wrapped in kitchen towel/pillow case, to prevent direct contact with the skin, as that can cause heat or ice burns. Apply for **5-15 minutes** on the affected area/s, and this can then be repeated up to around **every 1/2 to 1 hour**. Both should feel comfortable, not painful, if this is the case the packs are either too hot/cold, and a thicker barrier should be used i.e. towel, until the temperature is comfortable but can still be felt.