

# Exercises for Low Back Pain

Frequently low back pain can be caused or made worse by weak muscles in the back. It is important to strengthen both the abdominal muscles and the back and gluteal muscles. All of these exercises should be done only if pain free. Aim to do 3 sets of 8-10 repetitions.

## 1. Superman



- Lie on the floor in a prone (facedown) position, with your legs straight and your arms extended in front of you.
- Keeping your head in a neutral position (avoid looking up), slowly lift your arms and legs off the floor until you feel your lower back muscles contracting. Engage your glutes, your core, and the muscles between your shoulder blades simultaneously.
- Aim to lift your belly button slightly off the floor to contract your abs. A good way to picture this is to imagine you're Superman flying in the air.
- Hold this position for 2–3 seconds. Be sure you're breathing the entire time.

## 2. Glute Bridges



- Lie on your back and set your knees about shoulder-width apart, with your feet flat to the ground and your knees bent. Make sure your toes are pointed straight forward and that your heels are 6–8 inches from your glutes. Lay your arms flat on either side of you with your palms open toward the ceiling.
- Slowly raise your hips, engage your glutes, and squeeze your abs.
- Be careful not to arch your back as you lift your hips as high as possible. A perfect glute bridge consists of elevating your hips until your torso

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makes a straight line from your shoulder up to your knee.

- Once you reach the top of the glute bridge, squeeze your glutes as tightly as possible and hold for a few seconds.
- Lower your hips back down to the ground in a controlled motion without releasing the tension in your abs and glutes. Do not move your shoulder into any pain or discomfort.

### 3. Bird Dog



- Begin on all fours in the tabletop position.
  - Place your knees under your hips and your hands under your shoulders.
  - Maintain a **neutral spine** by engaging your abdominal muscles.
  - Draw your shoulder blades together.
  - Raise your right arm and left leg, keeping your shoulders and hips parallel to the floor.
  - Lengthen the back of your neck and tuck your chin into your chest to gaze down at the floor.
- Hold this position for a few seconds, then lower back down to the starting position.
  - Raise your left arm and right leg, holding this position for a few seconds.
  - Return to the starting position. This is 1 round.
  - Do 2 to 3 sets of 8 to 12 repetitions.

## 4. Side-lying Leg Lifts



- Lie on your side with your legs straight and hips stacked, with one arm bent under your head for support.
- Rotate your hips slightly forward.
- Internally rotate your top leg. Do this by pointing your toes toward the ground, so your top foot's big toe touches the side of your bottom foot rather than the feet resting against one another.
- Lift your top leg up and slightly back at a diagonal, keeping the knee straight and the leg internally rotated.
- Slowly bring your lifted leg back down.
- Repeat this 10–20 times on each side.