

Introduction



- The exercises outlined here are frequently recommended to help prevent and decrease low back pain. They strengthen the core supporting muscles of the back and trunk, teach good alignment and demonstrate gentle stretches for tight muscles.
- Not all of these exercises are suitable for all types of back pain. It is advised that you discuss them with your health care practitioner first (doctor, physiotherapist, pilates / yoga instructor, chiropractor, osteopath etc.) especially if you have a medical condition or have had previous surgery such as a total hip replacement. For this reason, the exercises have been password protected to prevent inappropriate use. The passwords will be made available after Consultation with a healthcare professional. Alternatively you can contact admin@spinedragon.com
- It is recommended that you read the low back pain and hurt not harm sections of the spinedragon website before embarking on these exercises.
- Perform each exercise slowly and gently. Stop any exercise if it hurts too much. Aim to complete twenty to thirty minutes of exercise per day. Remember that when reconditioning your back muscles the pain may well get worse before it gets better. This does not mean you are doing yourself any harm. You will be using deconditioned weaker muscles that need time to re-strengthen and relearn their function.
- Remember to pace yourself and gradually build up doing the exercises especially if you are having a good day. Do not do too much too soon or you may find that you suffer the next day. The number of repetitions is for guidance only.
- Remember to relax during the exercises, breathe slowly and deeply with each exercise, engage your stomach muscles to support your back, keep your neck long and your shoulders down away from your ears, and be attentive to symmetry and balance.
- Stop exercising if you develop severe pain that lasts more than 20 minutes.
- Your pelvic floor muscles are also very important when rehabilitating your back. When you are doing the exercises, gently pull up on your pelvic floor muscles at the same time. This will help you to contract your deep stomach muscles. The way to do this is to imagine that you are trying to stop passing wind. It is an internal pull and your buttocks should not clench and you should not bear down. No one will know that you are doing this exercise.
- If you are overweight then it is equally if not more important to start a healthy weight loss and diet program.
- If you are unable to get comfortably down to and off the floor then consider attending a gym, pilates or yoga class etc. where assistance is available. Alternatively try an aqua aerobics class.
- When your low back pain improves remember to continue to do the exercises regularly to maintain your core stability.
- **I would like to give a special thanks to the Vale Resort for the use of their facilities and to Mrs A Baker, Vale Resort Pilates Instructor (pictured)**
- **For more information please visit www.vale-hotel.com and www.vale-healthcare.com/physiotherapy-and-rehabilitation-consultants/**

Trunk Rotations 3



- **Step 1:** Place your feet on a gym ball with your knees bent and your arms held outstretched to the sides.
- **Step 2:** Gently pull in your lower stomach muscles to approximately a quarter of your maximum effort so that your lower back touches the floor.
- **Step 3:** Breathe in and gently rotate 20-30° to one side by letting both knees fall outwards to that side. Keep your ankles together firmly on the ball and shoulders square on the floor.
- **Step 4:** Exhale as you return to the starting position then release your stomach muscles. Repeat the exercise turning to the opposite side. Try to repeat the whole exercise twenty times.
- **NOTE:** Keep your shoulders on the floor and maintain contraction of your stomach muscles throughout.
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first twelve weeks following lumbar fusion surgery.
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first six weeks following discectomy / decompression.

Trunk Rotations 4



- **Step 1:** Place your feet in the air as if they were resting on a gym ball and hold your arms outstretched above you.
- **Step 2:** Gently pull in your lower stomach muscles to approximately a quarter of your maximum effort so that your lower back touches the floor.
- **Step 3:** Breathe in and gently rotate 20-30° to one side by letting both knees fall outwards to that side. Keep your ankles together firmly on the ball and shoulders square on the floor.
- **Step 4:** Exhale as you return to the starting position then release your stomach muscles. Repeat the exercise turning to the opposite side. Try to repeat the whole exercise twenty times.
- **NOTE:** Keep your shoulders on the floor and your arms upright. Maintain contraction of your stomach muscles throughout.
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first twelve weeks following lumbar fusion surgery.
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first six weeks following discectomy / decompression.

Pelvic Lifts 1



- **Step 1:** Lie on your back with the gym ball placed beneath your feet and your arms placed alongside your body.
- **Step 2:** Roll your pelvis so that your back comes to lie flat on the floor with your ribs drawn in.
- **Step 3:** Slowly lift your pelvis and hips off the floor so that your spine is straight and you come to rest on your shoulder blades.
- **Step 4:** Drop your belly button by 2cm squeeze your ribs and pelvis towards each other drawing in your stomach muscles. Ensure that you do not arch your back doing this – keep your back straight. Hold this for ten seconds.
- **Step 5:** Slowly return your pelvis to the floor by rolling down through your spine. Repeat the exercise ten to fifteen times.
- **Next Stage:** Attempt the exercise with your arms crossed over your chest so that your elbows are not in contact with the floor.
- **NOTE:** Do not over arch your spine or excessively tilt your pelvis.
- **CAUTION:** Be careful not to fall off the gym ball during this exercise.
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first twelve weeks following lumbar fusion surgery.
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first six weeks following discectomy / decompression.

Pelvic Lifts 2



- **Step 1:** Lie on your back with the gym ball placed beneath your feet and your arms placed alongside your body.
- **Step 2:** Roll your pelvis so that your back comes to lie flat on the floor with your ribs drawn in.
- **Step 3:** Slowly lift your pelvis and hips off the floor so that your spine is straight and you come to rest on your shoulder blades.
- **Step 4:** Drop your belly button by 2cm squeeze your ribs and pelvis towards each other drawing in your stomach muscles. Ensure that you do not arch your back doing this – keep your back straight.
- **Step 5:** Slowly lift one leg off the gym ball and hold for ten seconds. Ensure your pelvis stays square and does not drop to one side. Return your leg to the gym ball. Repeat the exercise five times for each leg.
- **Next Stage:** Attempt the exercise with your arms crossed over your chest so that your elbows are not in contact with the floor.
- **NOTE:** Do not over arch your spine or excessively tilt your pelvis.
- **CAUTION:** Be careful not to fall off the gym ball during this exercise.
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first twelve weeks following lumbar fusion surgery.
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first six weeks following discectomy / decompression.

Supine Bridge 1



- **Step 1:** Sit comfortably on the gym ball with your spine straight. Gently pull in your lower stomach muscles to approximately a quarter of your maximum effort.
- **Step 2:** Slowly walk your feet forward whilst leaning back into the ball. Keep your spine straight and do not over arch it.
- **Step 3:** Come to rest with your head and neck supported by the ball and your spine straight. Hold this position for five to ten seconds and then slowly return to the starting position.
- **NOTE:** Maintain contraction of your stomach muscles throughout. Do not allow your pelvis to dip to the floor or your back to arch during the exercise.
- **CAUTION:** Be careful not to fall off the gym ball during this exercise
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first twelve weeks following lumbar fusion surgery.
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first six weeks following discectomy / decompression.

Supine Bridge 2



- **Step 1:** Sit comfortably on the gym ball with your spine straight. Gently pull in your lower stomach muscles to approximately a quarter of your maximum effort.
- **Step 2:** Slowly walk your feet forward whilst leaning back into the ball. Keep your spine straight and do not over arch it.
- **Step 3:** Come to rest with your head and neck supported by the ball and your spine straight.
- **Step 4:** Slowly lift one leg off the floor. Do not allow your pelvis to tilt. Hold for five to ten seconds. Alternate between your legs and repeat five to ten times for each side.
- **NOTE:** Maintain contraction of your stomach muscles throughout. Do not allow your pelvis to dip to the floor or your back to arch during the exercise.
- **CAUTION:** Be careful not to fall off the gym ball during this exercise.
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first twelve weeks following lumbar fusion surgery.
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first six weeks following discectomy / decompression.

Prone Back Extension



- **Step 1:** Lie on your stomach with the gym ball placed under your hips allowing your body to curl forward over the top of the ball.
- **Step 2:** Lift your upper body off the ball until your spine is straight. Do not over arch your back or lift up too high. Keep your arms held out to the sides off the ball and your shoulders square. Hold for ten seconds.
- **Step 3:** Slowly return to the starting point and repeat the exercise ten to fifteen times.
- **NOTE:** Keep your neck in line with the rest of your spine.
- **CAUTION:** Be careful not to fall off the gym ball during this exercise.
- **CAUTION:** Be cautious doing this exercise in the first twelve weeks following lumbar fusion surgery.
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first six weeks following discectomy / decompression.

Prone Walk Forwards



- **Step 1:** Lie on your stomach with the gym ball placed under your hips allowing your body to curl forward over the top of the ball.
- **Step 2:** Slowly roll over the top of the ball and walk forwards using your arms until the ball is under your lower legs or feet. Use your stomach muscles to keep your spine straight and do not let your pelvis tilt. Keep your shoulders square.
- **Step 3:** Slowly return to the starting point and repeat the exercise ten times.
- **NOTE:** Do not allow your pelvis to dip to the floor or your back to arch during the exercise.
- **CAUTION:** Be careful not to fall off the gym ball during this exercise.
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first twelve weeks following lumbar fusion surgery.
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first six weeks following discectomy / decompression.

Prone Tucks



- **Step 1:** Lie on your stomach with the gym ball placed under your hips allowing your body to curl forward over the top of the ball.
- **Step 2:** : Slowly roll over the top of the ball and walk forwards using your arms until the ball is under your lower legs or feet. Use your stomach muscles to keep your spine straight and do not let your pelvis tilt. Keep your shoulders square.
- **Step 3:** Slowly bring your knees and the ball up towards your chest until your body is curled up. Keep your spine straight and do not allow your bottom to rise up in the air.
- **Step 4:** Slowly straighten your knees and the ball back until your legs are straight again. Repeat this tuck exercise five to ten times.
- **NOTE:** Do not allow your pelvis to drop to the floor or your back to arch during the exercise.
- **CAUTION:** Be careful not to fall off the gym ball during this exercise.
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first twelve weeks following lumbar fusion surgery.
- **CAUTION:** Avoid doing this exercise in the first six weeks following discectomy / decompression.