

# BACK PAIN



## What Causes Back Pain?

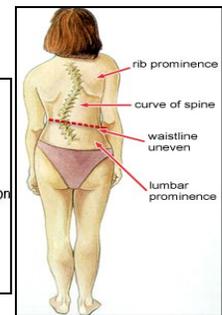
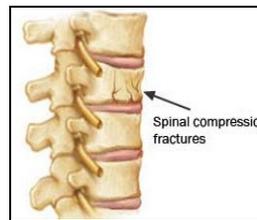
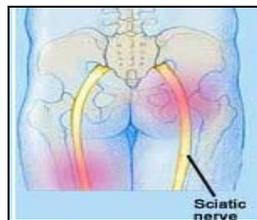
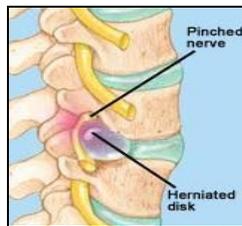
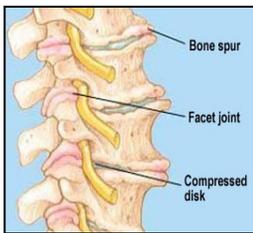
### Strains or Muscle Spasm

From strained muscles and ligaments  
From improper or heavy lifting  
After a sudden awkward movement



### Structural Problems

Arthritis  
Bulging or Ruptured Disk  
Sciatica  
Osteoporosis  
Skeletal Irregularities



## What Can Back Pain Cause?

- Decreased quality of life
- May affect activities of daily living
- Limited functional ability
- Decreased independence
- Depression
- Pain medication dependence
- Pain medication tolerance
- Decreased mobility, which can lead to decreased health

## When should I be alarmed or go to the doctor?

### Alarm Signs:

- Incontinence of bowel or bladder with rapid onset pain
- Trauma induced back pain
- Radiation of pain to legs
- Numbness in legs, buttocks, or back associated with back pain
- Loud pop or crushing noise associated with acute back pain

- Severe osteoporosis or cancer and new acute onset back pain
- Back and neck pain associated with fever, tense neck, and potential sick contacts

### When to go to the Emergency Room:

- If you have incontinence and numbness associated with the pain

### When to go to the Doctor:

- When any "alarm signs" occur
- When back pain is affecting quality of life
- After a fall or any other trauma
- If back pain is not improving with OTC therapies or home remedies

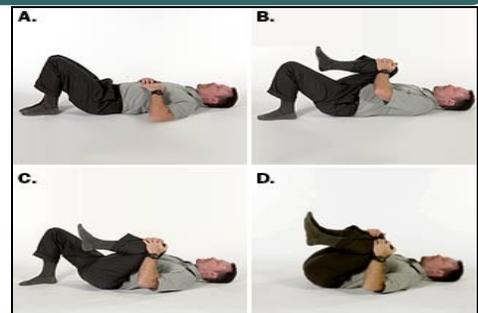
## What can I do to prevent back pain?

- Stretch before you get out of bed.
- Use log roll to get out of bed.
- Over-the-counter medicines can help pain or swelling: ibuprofen (brand name: Advil or Motrin), naproxen (brand name: Aleve or Naprosyn), acetaminophen (brand name: Tylenol).
- Heating pads or a warm bath or shower.
- Osteopathic manipulation, physical therapy, massage, or a chiropractor may help decrease your pain or make you feel better.
- Keep in shape, lose weight if overweight.
- Gentle exercise regularly, like walking or swimming. Inactivity can worsen low back pain.
- Don't lift heavy objects by bending over at the waist. Bend your hips and knees and then squat to pick up the object. Keep your back straight and hold the object close to your body. Don't twist your body while you are lifting.
- If you have to sit at your desk or drive for a long time, take breaks to stretch.

## STRETCHES

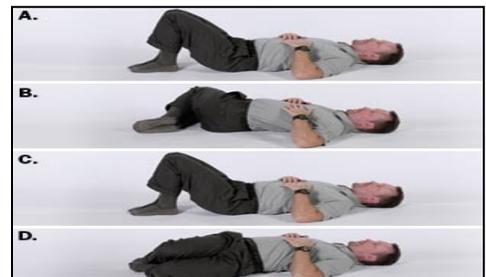
### Knee to back stretches

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor (A). Using both hands, pull up one knee and press it to your chest (B). Hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Return to the starting position (A) and repeat with the opposite leg (C). Return to the starting position and then repeat with both legs at the same time (D). Repeat each stretch 2-3 times — preferably once in the morning and once at night.



### Lower back rotational stretch

Lie on back with knees bent and your feet flat on the floor (A). Keeping your shoulders firmly on the floor, roll your bent knees to one side (B). Hold for 5 -10 seconds. Return to the starting position (C). Repeat on the opposite side (D). Repeat each stretch 2-3 times — preferably in the morning and at night.



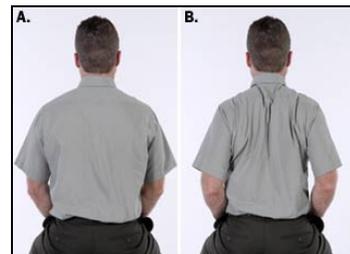
### Seated lower back rotational stretch

Sit on an armless chair or a stool. Cross right leg over left leg. Bracing your left elbow against the outside of your right knee, twist and stretch to the side (A). Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat on the opposite side (B). Repeat 3-5 times on each side, twice a day.



### Shoulder blade squeeze

Sit on an armless chair or a stool (A). Keeping your chin tucked in and your chest high, pull your shoulder blades together (B). Hold for 5 seconds, then relax. Repeat 3-5 times, twice a day.



**References:** 1. *Back Pain*. Mayo Clinic, 9 Feb 2010. Web. 7 Sept 2011. 2. *Back Exercises in 15 Minutes a Day*. Mayo foundation for medical education and research, 5 Feb 2011. Web. 8 Sept 2011. 3. *Low Back Pain*. AAFP, 15 April 2007. Web. 10 Sept 2011.