

Food Safety and Inspection Service
Wellness Training Program

Job Aid One: Exercises for the Low Back

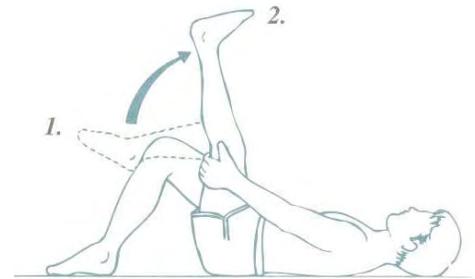
Improving flexibility and strength increases mobility in the back. The following nine exercises increase both flexibility and strength in the back. Exercise to the point of tension, not pain, and remember to warm up. (A warm-up period consists of walking and light general exercises designed to stimulate the muscles, heart, and lungs.)



1. Gluteus maximus stretch (on ground)

2. Hamstring stretch (on ground)

- Lie with feet flat on the floor
- Gently bring one knee to chest **(1)**
- Hold for 10-15 seconds
- Press heel toward the ceiling until a gentle stretch is felt **(2)**
- Hold for 10-15 seconds
- Repeat with other leg



3. Lower back stretch (on ground)

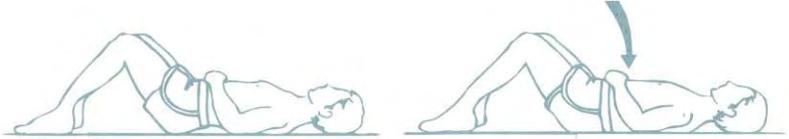
- Lie with feet flat on the floor
- Gently bring one knee to chest
- Hold for 10-15 seconds
- Repeat with other leg
- Repeat with both legs



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4. Pelvic tilts (on ground)

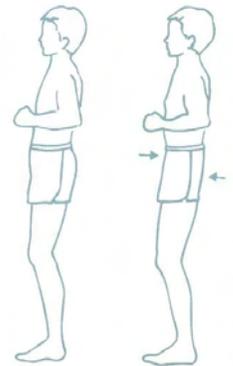
- Lie with feet flat on the floor
- Contract abdominal muscles, pushing back to the floor
- Hold for 3-5 seconds
- Repeat 8-10 times



5. Standing pelvic tilts

- Stand with feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent
- Contract the abdominal muscles, tilting the hips forward slightly

NOTE: This exercise is good to do while working.



6. Abdominal crunches

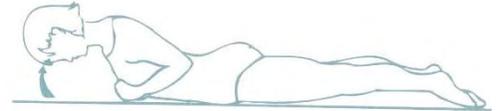
- Lie with feet flat on the floor
- Raise shoulders off the floor by contracting abdominal muscles (keeping lower back on floor)
- Begin with one set of 8-10 repetitions



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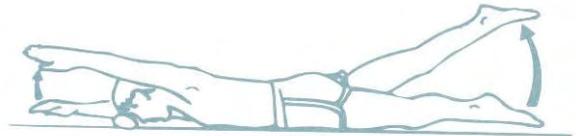
7. Shoulder lifts (prone position)

- Lie face down with hands on chest
- Keep head in line with spine by keeping eyes down
- Lift shoulders off ground
- Hold for count of 5
- Repeat 5 times



8. Opposite leg opposite arm (prone)

- Lie face down with hands above head (a pillow may be placed under the forehead)
- Lift opposite leg and arm at the same time (keeping head down)
- Hold for count of 5
- Repeat 5 times



9. Calf-flexor stretches (standing, against wall)

- Place hands on the wall at shoulder height
- Bring one foot behind the other, keeping feet in the same direction
- Maintain straight line from back heel to top of head
- Hold for 10-15 seconds
- Repeat with other leg

