

# Exercises for a Healthy Back



## Bridge Exercise

- Lie down with your feet on the floor, heels directly under your knees.
- Push through your heels and lift the entire spine, except for your neck.
- Slowly return to starting position and repeat.

## Bent-Knee Crunch Exercise

- Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor.
- Place your hands behind your head and keep your elbows out to the sides or keep arms crossed over chest. Your head should be aligned with your spine.
- Slowly curl your head and shoulders off the mat.
- Slowly lower your back toward the mat.
- Repeat.

## Bird-Dog Exercise

- Come to a hands and knees position.
- Engage your core and abdominal muscles.
- Lift your left leg off the floor until it is at or near parallel to the floor.
- Slowly raise your right arm.
- Gently lower yourself back to starting position.
- Switch sides and repeat.



## Knee to Chest Stretch

- Lie on your back with the backs of your heels flat on the floor.
- Gently pull one knee up to your chest until you feel a stretch in your lower back.
- Bring the knee as close to your chest as comfortably possible.
- Keep the opposite leg relaxed in a comfortable position, either with your knee bent or with your leg extended.
- Hold for about 30 seconds.
- Switch legs and repeat.

## Child's Pose (Lower Back Stretch)

- Start on hands and knees on a mat with toes pointing behind you. Big toes should touch, and widen knees towards the outside of the mat as you sit back toward your heels.
- Stretch out through your back and arms. Allow your chest to rest between your thighs and your forehead to rest on the floor.
- Inhale and lengthen the spine, extending through the upper body and exhale as you fold deeper into the pose.
- Hold this position for 5-10 slow, deep breaths.

## Cat/Cow Stretch

- Position yourself on your hands and knees.
- Slowly let your back and abdomen sag toward the floor.
- Slowly arch your back, as if you're pulling your abdomen up toward the ceiling.
- Return to the starting position.
- Repeat.

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