

# Back Stretches: Exercises

## Introduction

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Here are some examples of exercises for stretching your back. Start each exercise slowly. Ease off the exercise if you start to have pain.

Your doctor or physical therapist will tell you when you can start these exercises and which ones will work best for you.

## How to do the exercises

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### Overhead stretch

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1. Stand comfortably with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Looking straight ahead, raise both arms over your head and reach toward the ceiling. Do not allow your head to tilt back.
3. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds, then lower your arms to your sides.
4. Repeat 2 to 4 times.

### Side stretch

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1. Stand comfortably with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Raise one arm over your head, and then lean to the other side.
3. Slide your hand down your leg as you let the weight of your arm gently stretch your side muscles. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds.
4. Repeat 2 to 4 times on each side.

## Press-up

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1. Lie on your stomach, supporting your body with your forearms.
2. Press your elbows down into the floor to raise your upper back. As you do this, relax your stomach muscles and allow your back to arch without using your back muscles. As your press up, do not let your hips or pelvis come off the floor.
3. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds, then relax.
4. Repeat 2 to 4 times.

## Relax and rest

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1. Lie on your back with a rolled towel under your neck and a pillow under your knees. Extend your arms comfortably to your sides.
2. Relax and breathe normally.
3. Remain in this position for about 10 minutes.

4. If you can, do this 2 or 3 times each day.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

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