



WELLNESS

CHALLENGE

# Take care of your back



## Prevent lower back pain

Did you know that lower back pain affects 80% of adults at some point in their lives?<sup>1</sup> It's a common problem. And depending on the severity, it can make your everyday life harder and keep you from doing the things you love most. But there's a lot you can do to help prevent it.

## Start your challenge today

Do healthy back stretches and exercises to help improve your posture over the next four weeks.

### How to begin:

- ✓ See the list of healthy back activities on the next page.
- ✓ Choose to do one to four activities every day for four weeks.
- ✓ Check off the activities you complete each day on the challenge tracker.

### It's Simple:

Talk with your doctor to see if it's okay for you to start any physical activity.



<sup>1</sup>National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. Low Back Pain Fact Sheet. Available at: [ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Fact-Sheets/Low-Back-Pain-Fact-Sheet#3102\\_8](https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Fact-Sheets/Low-Back-Pain-Fact-Sheet#3102_8). Accessed November 30, 2023.

## Healthy back activities:



### Standing exercise

- Pull your shoulders back and avoid hunching over.
- Don't lean your head forward, backward or to the side.
- Keep your earlobes in line with your shoulders.
- Shift your weight from one foot to the other if you must stand for a long time.



### Sitting exercise

- Keep your feet flat on the floor or on a footrest.
- Bend your knees at a right angle and keep them at or slightly above your hips.
- Try to keep your neck and back as straight as possible.
- Avoid sitting in the same position for long periods of time. Get up at least once every hour.



### Neck stretch

- Keep shoulders down and relaxed.
- Touch your hands lightly on your thighs or chair.
- Tilt your head toward your shoulder. Hold for 15-30 seconds.
- Repeat two to four times toward each shoulder.



### Overhead stretch

- Raise both arms straight above your head.
- Slowly drop your right arm and lean to the right side. Don't hunch forward or lean too far back.
- Feel the stretch in your left side and then hold for 15 seconds.
- Return to the original position with your arms over your head. Drop your left arm and repeat on the left side.
- Repeat two to four times on each side.



### Shoulder rolls

- Keep your head facing forward and your back straight.
- Roll your shoulders up towards your ears, then back, then down, then forward in a circular motion.
- Roll your shoulders in the opposite direction.
- Repeat two to four times.

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# TRACK your healthy back activities

## See how well you're doing

Choose one to four healthy back activities each day for four weeks.

Use the challenge tracker below to check off the activities you complete each day.

	Day	Standing Exercise	Sitting Exercise	Neck Stretch	Overhead Stretch	Shoulder Rolls
Week 1	1					
	2					
	3					
	4					
	5					
	6					
	7					
Week 2	1					
	2					
	3					
	4					
	5					
	6					
	7					
Week 3	1					
	2					
	3					
	4					
	5					
	6					
	7					
Week 4	1					
	2					
	3					
	4					
	5					
	6					
	7					

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