

### Acute Low Back Pain Guidelines

Low back pain is a painful and potentially debilitating condition that affects thousands of people around the world every day. However, when faced with an episode of low back pain many of us are unsure of how best to manage this frustrating condition in its initial stages.

*The guidelines and exercises described below are some of the more basic and effective strategies utilised to restore normal low back function – your physiotherapist will discuss with you any specific adaptations, progressions and precautions that have been tailored to your individual presentation. Any acute injury should be assessed by your physiotherapist prior to starting a rehabilitation program.*

- **Don't panic** – evidence suggests that the vast majority of people suffering acute low back pain for the first time will recover completely within 3 months – particularly if they are suitably managed through an episode by an appropriate practitioner. Pain experiences and their physiological causes are variable between individuals and thus recovery times may vary between patients – this is completely normal.
- **Remain active** and try not to focus solely on your pain at all times. Avoid periods of prolonged sitting and attempt gentle walking on flat surfaces to prevent excessive stiffness.
- **Gentle anti-inflammatories** can often be useful to provide gentle relief for mild to moderate pain – always consult your GP prior to using stronger medications.
- Consistent use of **gentle heat therapy** (such as heat patches, a wheat bag or having a hot shower) can be extremely helpful to relieve any associated muscle spasm.

#### Early Stage Rehabilitation

1) Static Glute Stretch

- Option 1: Lying on your back, bend both knees up to 45 degrees. Place ankle of targeted leg on opposite knee and pull knee to chest
- Option 2: Lying on your back, pull your knee up towards your opposite shoulder
- Aim to hold stretch for 30 seconds
- **Do not push into pain**



Client:

Initial Consult:

# Tailor Made Physiotherapy

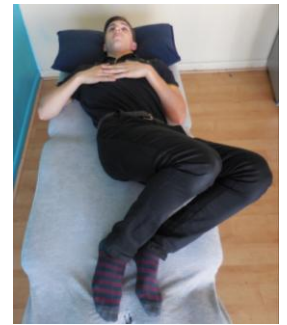
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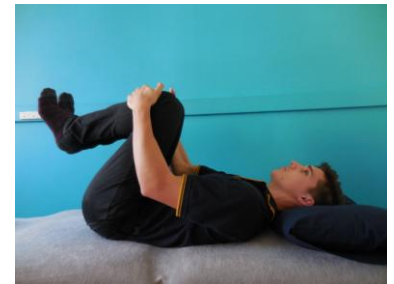
## 2) Knee Rocks (lumbar rotation)

- Lying on your back, bend both knees up to 45 degrees
- Keeping feet on the ground, gently rotate knees side-to-side
- **Do not push into pain**



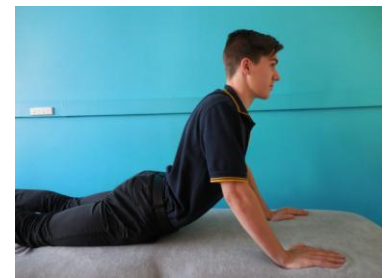
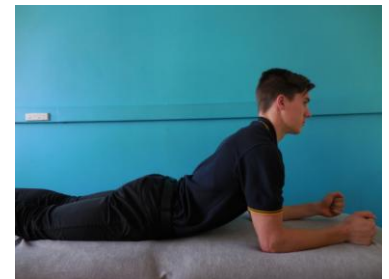
## 3) Knees to Chest (lumbar flexion)

- Lying on your back, gently hug both knees up to your chest
- Hold for 3 seconds and gently relax
- **Do not push into pain**



## 4) Arching Backs (lumbar extension)

- Lying on your stomach, place both hands just wide of shoulders
- Keeping your hips on the ground, gently arch backwards through the lower back by pushing up through the hands
- **Do not push into pain**



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### Late Stage Rehabilitation

#### 1) Regimental Soldier

- Place theraband under both feet, holding one end in each hand
- Slowly bring arms up in front of you keeping elbows straight, hold for 2 secs and then bring arms back
- You should feel a tightness in your abs
- DO NOT sway backward or forward, imagine you are in the army and have to stay upright.
- You can stand 1cm out from a wall if you need some guidance
- Do not continue if you have shoulder pain



#### 2) Core Activation

- Find the bones on the front of the hip, slide your fingers in a few cm and down a few cm
- Tighten the lower abdominal muscles beneath your fingers (you won't feel much, just a slight contraction) – imagine you're trying to squeeze into a tight pair of pants, or stopping yourself from going to the toilet.
- Hold for 5-10 breaths, or as long as you can and repeat 5-10 times

#### 3) Neutral Spine

- Rock your pelvis as far forward as you can so you can feel your lower back arch off the bed, then rock your pelvis backwards as far as you can so you can feel your lower back press against the bed
- Repeat this a few times, then try and stop when you're in the middle of these two positions.

#### 4) Table Top

- Find your neutral spine and activate your core, from this position slowly lift one leg up towards your chest, stopping when your knee is on top of your hips and have your foot in line with your knee
- Repeat with your other leg
- You should feel your core working to hold your legs in place, hold this position for as long as you can comfortably, aiming for around 30sec-1min before bringing your feet back down.



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