STRETCHING EXERCISES FOR PAIN REDUCTION

This material is presented for informational and educational purposes only. If you experience any pain or difficulty with these exercises, stop and consult your healthcare provider. Consider a physical therapy consult for a specific exercise program designed for you.
INDEX

Choosing the Right Exercises.................................3
Low Back Pain Exercises ........................................4-5
Stabilization Exercises ...........................................6-7
Neck Pain Exercises..............................................8-9
Additional Pain Management Options....................10-11

ABOUT ADVANCED PAIN MANAGEMENT

Advanced Pain Management (APM) is one of the largest pain management groups in the country, with locations in Wisconsin and Minnesota. We offer a broad array of comprehensive pain management treatments administered by fellowship trained, board certified physicians.

Our physicians work on an individual level to find the source of your pain and recommend the best treatment options, whether that's minimally invasive procedures, physical therapy, behavioral health care or a combination of these treatments. Our priority is exceptional patient care and we're dedicated to getting you back to the things you love.
CHOOSING THE RIGHT EXERCISES FOR YOUR PAIN

Pain experts agree that carefully selected exercises can help reduce chronic pain. Exercise and activity can also help prevent pain from returning in the future. These exercises can often provide quick and significant relief and speed up your recovery. It is important to monitor your pain during the exercises. If you experience any pain or difficulty with these exercises, stop and consult your healthcare provider.

SIGN TO WATCH FOR

Signs a back pain exercise is NOT helping:
» Pain is moving away from the center of your lower back.
» Pain is moving into your buttock.
» Pain is moving down the leg.

Signs a neck pain exercise is NOT helping:
» Pain is moving away from the neck itself.
» Pain is moving into your shoulder.
» Pain is moving down the arm.

Signs a back pain exercise IS helping:
» Symptoms move out of your leg.
» Symptoms are felt more in the center of the back.
» You can complete more activity with less pain.

Signs a neck pain exercise IS helping:
» Symptoms move out of your arm.
» Symptoms are felt more in the center of the neck.
» You can complete more activity with less pain.

Numbness and tingling usually recover as well, but sometimes more slowly than the pain. Stop the exercises that are not helping or that aggravate your preexisting pain and continue the ones that help your pain the most.

AEROBIC EXERCISE

Examples of aerobic activity include walking, biking or swimming. A good goal is 30 minutes of aerobic activity per day, but it is OK if you can’t do that at the beginning. Start at a level you are comfortable with and gradually increase your time by 1-2 minutes per week.
LOW BACK PAIN EXERCISES

Keep breathing. Do NOT hold your breath during these exercises.

**BASIC STRETCHES**

**Lower Trunk Rotation**

» Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet resting on the floor.

» Keeping your back flat, slowly rotate your knees down toward the floor until you feel a comfortable stretch in your trunk.

» Hold 5 seconds, Repeat 5 times to each side. Perform 3 times a day.

» Tip: Make sure that your back and shoulders stay in contact with the floor.

**Single and/or Double Knees to Chest**

» Lie on your back with your legs straight.

» Using your hands, slowly pull one knee toward your chest until you feel a gentle stretch in your lower back.

» Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 5 times with each leg. Repeat 3 times a day

» Tip: Make sure to keep your back relaxed during the stretch.

» Repeat with both knees to your chest.
LOW BACK PAIN EXERCISES

OTHER STRETCHES

Supine Hamstring Stretch
» Lie on your back with one leg straight and the other leg bent.
» Bring your knee toward your chest and grab the back of your thigh with both hands.
» Slowly straighten your knee until you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh and hold for 30 seconds.
» Tip: Make sure to keep your back flat on the floor during the stretch.

Supine Piriformis stretch
» Lie on your back with your knees bent.
» Cross one leg over the other so your ankle is resting on the opposite knee.
» Pull your leg toward your chest until you feel a gentle stretch in your buttocks.
» Hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times. Perform 2 or 3 times a day.
» Tip: Make sure to keep your back flat against the bed during the stretch.

Prone Press-ups
» Lying on your stomach on the floor or a firm bed, push upward with your arms, letting your lower back sag.
» Hold for 1-2 seconds. Repeat 10 times with a deeper back arch each time.
» Repeat every 2 hours.
STABILIZATION EXERCISES

Keep breathing. Do NOT hold your breath during these exercises.

Your core muscles include your abdominals, back muscles, pelvic floor and diaphragm. When you’re experiencing back pain, your core muscles weaken and don’t work the way they should. It’s important to strengthen and re-educate these muscles to engage and create a natural support/brace for your back. These exercises are meant to be done in a progression, moving on to the next phase when you can do the exercises in a slow and controlled manner without holding your breath and without increased pain.

**PHASE 1 (WEEKS 1-2)**

**Abdominal Brace**

- Lie on your back, your knees bent.
- Place 2 fingers inside your hip bone.
- Feel your abs as they tighten.
- Breathe and hold for 5 seconds.

**Abdominal Brace with Toe Tap**

- Lie on your back with your knees bent. Perform abdominal brace.
- Lift one leg off the ground 3-4 inches.
- Slowly lower leg, touching your toes to the floor.
- Repeat 10 times with each leg.

**PHASE 2 (WEEKS 2-4)**

**Abdominal Brace with Leg Extension**

- Lie on your back with your knees bent. Perform abdominal brace.
- Kick out one leg while keeping back straight.
- Return leg to starting position.
- Repeat 10 times with each leg.
STABILIZATION EXERCISES

Abdominal Brace with Bridge
» Lie on your back with your knees bent. Perform abdominal brace.
» Slowly raise buttocks up, holding back stable.
» Breathe, keep neck relaxed, and hold 5 seconds.
» Slowly return back to floor.
» Repeat 5 times.

Modified Plank
» Start on your knees and elbows.
» Tighten your abdominals and keep your back neutral.
» Hold for 10 seconds. Work up to 30-60 seconds as able.
» Repeat for 3 reps, 2-3 times day.

PHASE 3 (WEEKS 4-6)
4-Point Hip Extension
» Start on your hands and knees.
» Tighten your abdominals and keep your back neutral.
» Extend one leg behind you for a few seconds.

Standard Plank
» Start on knees and elbows. Extend both legs back.
» Tighten your abs and keep your back neutral.
» Hold 10 seconds. Work up to 30-60 seconds as able.
NECK PAIN EXERCISES

Keep breathing. Do NOT hold your breath during these exercises.

EXERCISES TO CENTRALIZE AND REDUCE SYMPTOMS

Sitting or Standing Chin Tuck

» Sitting or standing up straight, gently tuck your chin back so your ear is aligned with your shoulder.

» Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 5 times, 3 times a day.

» Tip: Think about making yourself taller as you do this exercise.

Levator Scapulae Stretch

» Sit in a chair and grasp the seat with the hand on the side you are feeling tight.

» Place your other hand on your head and gently pull down diagonally to the other side. Look in the direction you are pulling.

» Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 2-3 reps, 2 times a day.

The goal with targeted exercises is to reduce pain, especially the pain radiating down the arm(s). Symptom "centralization" occurs when pain moves out of your arm/shoulder and closer to the center or midline of your neck. It is important to monitor your pain during these exercises.
NECK PAIN EXERCISES

Upper Trap Stretch

» Begin by retracting your head back into a chin tuck position.
» Place one hand behind your back and gently draw your head toward the opposite side with the help of your other arm.
» Hold 20 seconds.
» Repeat with other side.
» Repeat for 3-4 reps, 2 times a day.

Scalene/SCM Stretch

» Place your hands overlapping on your breast bone and firmly press downward.
» Gently bend your neck to the left and back slightly.
» Hold for 20 seconds.
» Repeat with other side.
» Perform 3-4 reps twice daily.

POSTURE

If symptoms are worse with sitting, it’s likely related to your posture. A forward head position maintained for a long period of time can produce and aggravate neck pain.

Good posture is placing your neck in a “neutral” position, with your ears directly above your shoulders. This will place the weight of your head directly over your spine and minimize the stress on the discs and other supporting structures in your neck.

It helps to first approach the new posture as an exercise, which will help you find the correct head position, as well as build the muscle strength and stamina to hold the position. Try placing your head in a neutral position for a minute or two every hour initially, and then build from there.
For some chronic pain sufferers, stretching – paired with ice, heat, a reduction in activity levels – can provide relief. More persistent pain that lasts longer than six weeks generally requires more attention and treatment.

If you’re experiencing chronic pain that hasn’t responded to conservative treatments, it may be time to consider a pain management specialist. At APM, our knowledgeable providers offer:

- Expertise and experience. Our physicians are fellowship trained and board certified, and receive more instruction on pain and treatment approaches than typical physicians.
- The ability to prescribe pain-relieving medications and the knowledge needed to monitor patients effectively and taper them down if necessary.
- The expertise and advanced technology necessary to accurately diagnose your pain.
- A multidisciplinary approach and the ability to refer you to excellent physical therapists, behavioral health providers, chiropractors and even spinal surgeons if less invasive treatments prove to be ineffective.

**To help you get relief from chronic pain, your APM physician will:**

- Provide education to help you understand what is causing your painful symptoms.
- Consider medications and monitor you to ensure safety and effectiveness.
- Consider the use of minimally invasive procedures to aid in diagnosing and treating your pain.
- Suggest lifestyle modifications that may help reduce your pain and improve your overall health.
- Make recommendations for at-home therapy that can help you minimize pain.
- Consider referrals to a physical therapist, chiropractor or spine specialist for surgical options.
Conditions Treated

Advanced Pain Management has more than 30 doctors in a variety of specialties dedicated to pinpointing the cause of your pain. We treat a number of painful conditions including:

- Back pain
- Carpal tunnel
- Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS)
- Diabetic neuropathic pain
- Fibromyalgia
- Headaches
- Herniated discs
- Hip pain
- Knee pain
- Neck pain
- Pelvic and abdominal pain
- Sacroiliac pain
- Sciatica
- Shingles (Postherpetic neuralgia)
- Shoulder pain
- Spinal stenosis
- Work and sports injuries

Treatment Options

- Epidural steroid injections
- Facet joint injections
- Intradiscal electrothermal therapy
- Intrathecal pump implants
- Kyphoplasty
- Lumbar and cervical discograms
- Lumbar sympathetic blocks
- Medication management
- Minimally invasive lumbar decompression (MILD) procedure
- Neurolytic blocks
- Percutaneous tenotomy
- Peripheral nerve blocks
- Radiofrequency neuroablation
- Sacroiliac joint injections
- Spinal cord stimulation
- Stellate ganglion blocks
- Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS)
- Trigger point injections
- Vertebroplasty