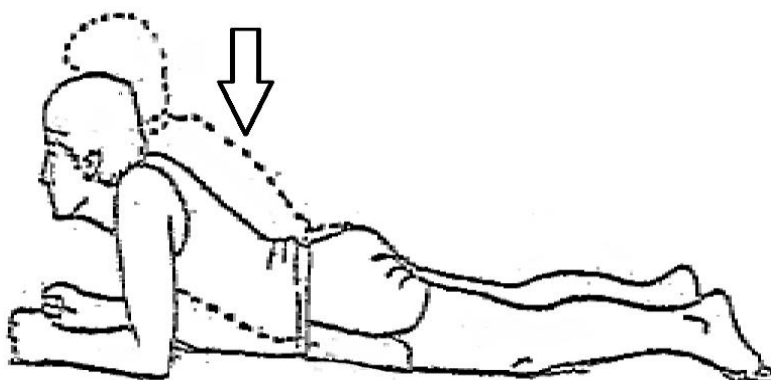


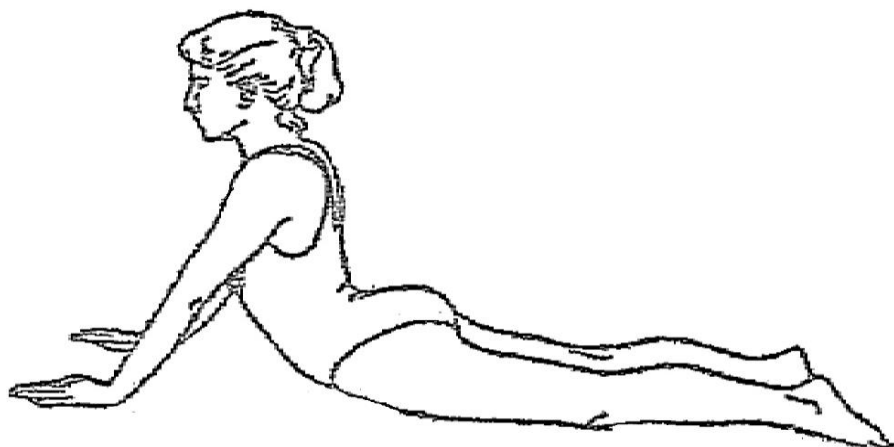
Back pain is a common problem and often feels like a stiffness, ache or tension in your lower back. Sometimes the pain can travel down your legs or cause pins and needles or numbness. How you cope or manage your back pain is usually more important than an exact diagnosis. Bed rest should be kept to minimum, starting to get up for short periods and walk about the house. At this stage you avoid sitting for more than 10 minutes and forward bending. The healing process will be much faster if you can avoid aggravating movements and postures. The lordosis or hollow in your back should be maintained as much as possible, even at night, so do not curl up in a ball.

Try the following McKenzie method outlined below in 6 steps, if you can comfortably lay flat on your front you can skip to step four and rest there for five minutes.

1. Lay on your front with two pillows under your waist.
2. Relax in this position for 10 minutes.
3. After the 10 minutes remove one of the pillows
4. After a short time you should be able to lay flat on your front.
5. We want to slowly regain the lordosis (curve) in your low back. Keep your hips down while you raise your upper body as seen in the picture below. You will find this easier to do if you prop yourself up on your elbows.



6. As soon as possible start to do the extension exercise seen below, here you will push up onto straight arms up to ten times, please remember to breathe calmly.



General instructions when managing acute low back pain

By doing the exercise overleaf your referred pain which has spread down your leg should reduce and likely become more concentrated in your back, this is known as 'centralisation'. If the opposite happens and the pain spreads further down the leg and becomes worse then stop and consult your physiotherapist.

Pain killers

Regular simple pain killer can help manage your symptoms. If the pain is strong please contact you GP and ask for stronger analgesia and anti-inflammatories.

Posture

Try to maintain good posture, avoid stooping, bending and twisting until the back settles. Try to maintain the lumbar lordosis when you walk and sit.

Sitting

Sit as little as possible as it compresses your back, less than 20 minutes at a time. Use a supporting roll, perhaps a rolled up towel, in the small of you back. When you sit keep the legs bent, not out in front of you on a stool. Avoid soft sofas and low easy chairs.

Lying

A good firm mattress is desirable, if yours is over 8 years old, sagging and uncomfortable please consider another. Laying on your front is advised.

Movement

Movement is beneficial to aid recovery. Do not sit or stand in one position for too long. Walking is usually helpful, start slowly on flat ground and gradually build up to longer walks. Exercise has an important role in the treatment of low back pain, a gentle swim using front or back crawl may help you. Try to return to normal activities as pain allows.

Lifting

Avoid lifting altogether if possible. If you have to then try to use good posture maintaining the lumbar lordosis and using your legs for power.

Driving

When in acute pain drive as little as possible, be a passenger. Check that your lordosis is supported by the car seat, and keep the knees bent.

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