



# **The Healthy Back Exercise Guide**

# Ball Sitting



Sit on ball with low back in "neutral" posture for up to five minutes (or longer) periodically during the day. Clinician's note: Have the patient perform adominal hollowing while seated in this position. Abdominal hollowing inclines patient's navel in towards spine without holding their breath. This engages Transversus-abdominis and multifidus muscles (mms)



Sit with one foot off the floor for up to ten seconds. Repeat on opposite side. Perform one repetition on each side that lasts up to ten seconds. Perform twice per day.



With a steady fluid movement, start by raising the right leg and left arm with weight in hand simultaneously. Return to neutral position and progress without rest by raising the left leg and right arm with weight in hand simultaneously and return to neutral. Perform this cycle five times, twice per day. Begin by holding a light weight in each hand. Gradually increase the weights each week.

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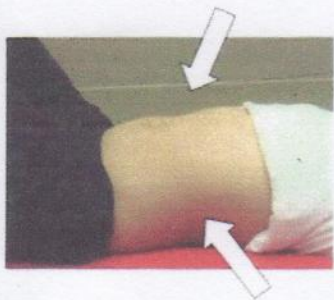


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# LOW BACK STABILIZATION PROCEDURES

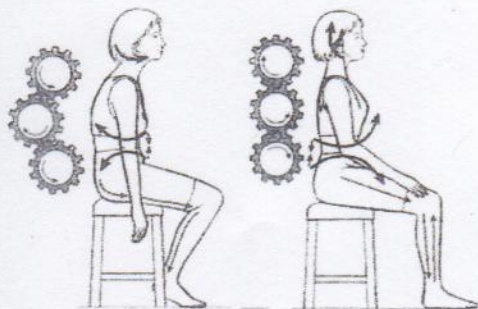
## Transverse Abdominus (Supine)

### Start Bracing



Tighten muscles 360° around your waist as if you were going to resist a hit in your abdomen. Or, try to cough and stop just as you are about to make the sound. Contract 360° around the waist, only 1/3 of a full contraction. Hold and breathe normal. Narrowing on sides of waist is the visible sign done correctly. As you breathe IN, the abdomen should rise up. Hold for two to three breaths, (5-8 seconds) repeat 10 times.

Progress as confident to Advanced levels:  
Hold for 1 minute, repeat 10 times Hold for 3 minutes, repeat 3 times Hold 5 minutes, repeat 2 times



### Intermediate (Sitting)

Progress to practice holding for 3-5 minutes while in a sitting posture on a stable surface

Protocol - Perform 2 times per Day. Progress as you master the technique



### Advanced (Sitting)

Progress to an unstable surface. Hold for 1 minute, repeat 10 times, twice a day

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## Birddog I

Lift right arm and left leg simultaneously. Do not let your back sag, your pelvis tip, or shift your body weight to one side or the other. Hold position for three seconds and then repeat on other arm and leg. Repeat procedure five times, twice per day. When this exercise becomes stable, add "Birddog II."

Clinician's note: Have patient perform abdominal hollowing while in "Birddog1."



## Birddog II

Perform "birddog" over a ball. Hold position for three seconds. Repeat procedure five times, twice per day.

Clinician's note: Have patient perform abdominal hollowing while in "Birddog1."



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## The "Plank"

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### Beginners



Form a "plank" by bridging on your elbows/forearms and toes. Hold for five seconds, repeat five times, twice per day. When this becomes stable, proceed to Intermediate level.

### Intermediate



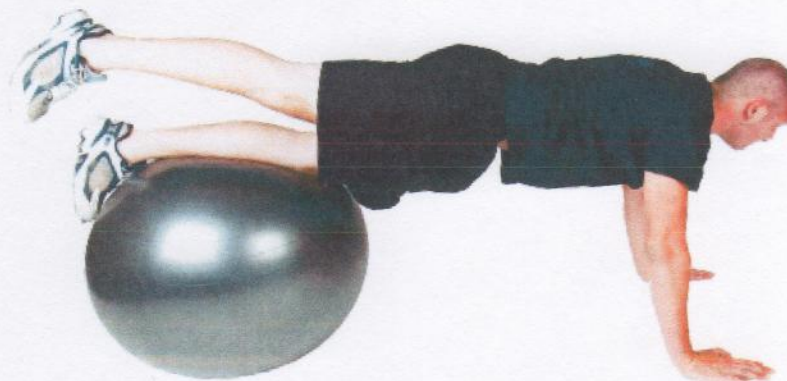
While in the plank position, lift one foot off the floor. Hold for five seconds, then repeat on other side. Perform five repetitions on each side twice per day. When this becomes stable, proceed to Intermediate Advanced level.

### Intermediate Advanced



Perform the plank exercise with ball under lower legs. Maintain position for ten seconds, perform one repetition twice per day. When this exercise becomes stable, proceed to Advanced level.

### Advanced



While in the plank position with ball under lower legs, extend hip and hold for five seconds, perform one repetition on each side twice per day.

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## Supine Pelvic Bridge

### Beginner Levels

Perform exercise twice per day, 5 repetitions each time, and hold for 5 seconds. Use support under head and neck as needed while performing exercises based on patient's comfort.

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### Beginner Level 1



Lift pelvis until you form a straight line from your shoulders down to your knees. When this exercise becomes stable, proceed to Beginner Level 2. Hold 3 to 5 seconds.

### Beginner Level 2



Same as previous, except that your arms are off the floor. When this exercise becomes stable, proceed to Intermediate Level 1.

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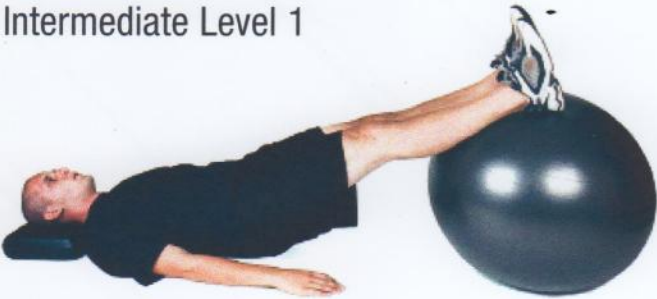
## Supine Pelvic Bridge

Intermediate and Advanced Levels

Perform exercise twice per day, 5 repetitions each time, and hold for 5 seconds. Use support under head and neck as needed while performing exercises based on patient's comfort.

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### Intermediate Level 1



Place both feet on ball and lift pelvis. When this becomes stable, proceed to Intermediate Level 2. Be sure to leave arms flat on the floor.

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### Intermediate Level 2



Same as previous, except arms are off the floor. When this exercise becomes stable, proceed to Advanced. Try to keep your pelvis level. Don't let it drop!

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### Advanced Level



Perform Intermediate Level 2 exercise and hold position while lifting right foot off the ball. Repeat with other leg. Ideally, try to keep your hips level, which may be difficult.

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## “Sidebridge”

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### Beginners



Lay on right side propped up on right forearm with hips in neutral position and knees flexed to 90°. Place left hand on hip. Lift pelvis up so that only your forearm and right knee are touching the floor. Hold for five seconds, repeat five times on each side. Perform twice per day. When this exercise becomes stable, proceed to Intermediate level.

### Intermediate



Lay on right side propped up on right forearm with both hips and knees straight. Place left hand on hip. Lift pelvis until only the outside of your right ankle and your right forearm are touching the floor. Hold for five seconds, repeat five times on each side. Perform twice per day. When this exercise becomes stable, proceed to Advanced level.

### Advanced



Perform the Intermediate level position and hold it while raising your top leg. Hold for five seconds, repeat five times on each side. Perform twice per day.

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## Squat



While keeping back straight and not bending forward at the hips, slowly lower your body by bending your knees. Go down until your heels begin to rise. Come back up and repeat five times, twice per day.

When this exercise becomes easy, hold weights in your hands. Begin with light weights and gradually increase the weight each week.

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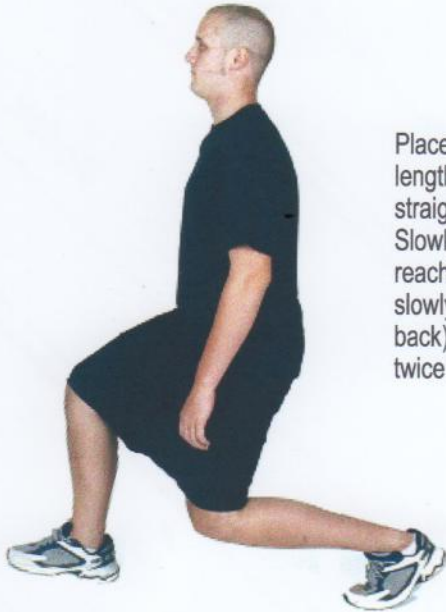
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## Lunge

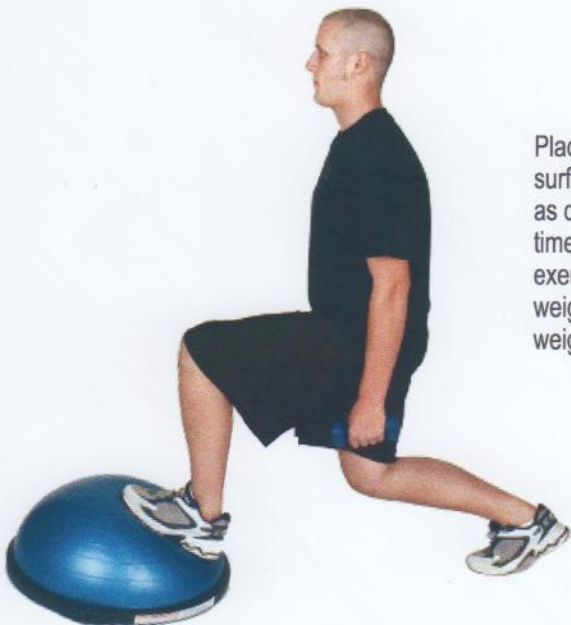
### Lunge on Stable Surface



Place your right foot approximately a thigh's length out in front of you. Keep your upper back straight and do not lean forward at the hips. Slowly lower your body as if your hands are reaching down for something on the floor, then slowly come back up (but do not move foot back). Repeat five times on each side. Perform twice per day.

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### Lunge on Labile Surface



Place your left foot on a "soft" surface and perform the lunge as described above. Repeat 5 times on each side. As this exercise becomes easier, hold weight in hands. Increase the weight gradually each week.

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