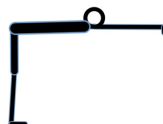


For relief of Acute and Chronic Back Pain

If your back is painful and self massage is not helping; then assume an injury and please take it to a physio or medical person to repair it. Then keep it in good condition with one or more of these self-help methods below:

The 90 degree method



(This method is quick and easy to do; works well and doesn't look too weird. You can do this one often while doing heavy or awkward work.)

- Place both hands on something firm (a table or chairback) at about waist level.
- 'Walk' backwards keeping arms straight; until your back is flat and parallel to the ground. Do what you can!
- Keep knees fairly slack. Keep neck straight and relaxed.
- Tilt pelvis slightly and gently back and forth. Relax. Take a few easy breaths.
- Stand up, hands on hips, bend over backwards slightly, push pelvis forward for a breath or two.

Repeat this supported forward bend + backward bend a few times. This can be combined easily and effectively with Exercise 1 below.

The 90 90 method



(This method is useful for gently undoing major damage such as due to overload, accidents etc.) Please see a medical practitioner for advice.

- Lie on your back on the floor with calves of your legs on the seat of a kitchen chair. (so that hips and knees form two 90 degree bends)
- Stay there for 10 minutes or more; up to an hour is fine. You may read or watch TV or meditate or sleep.

Twice a day is fine too and more often can be very helpful if you are seriously compromised.

Cat Pose

This is a yoga method which is recommended as effective for a sore back. Please find a yoga teacher who may be able to teach it to you.

Child Pose

Kneel on floor, lie body forward onto knees, place head on floor, place arms

next to sides. Be comfortable; breathe; turn head occasionally. If my back is very stiff or sore then I place a cushion on my knees to lay my chest on.

Basic Squat

Squat with heels in contact with ground. Place phone books or such under your heels if necessary. At first just go down and stand up again. Repeat until you can manage a few seconds or a minute. then gradually extend time and/or remove the prop under your heels.

Stretching

Stretch/relax exercises to extend the range of your movement: Never take yourself into Pain; Do Not hurt yourself. Rather

- Go to the edge of pain,
- Back off slightly and hold for a moment or two. Relax for a moment. Repeat.

or, I like the yoga method of:

- Take a slow Inbreath,
- Apply tension to the edge of pain,
- Hold,
- Breath out and release the tension a bit. Repeat.

Notice how the range of motion increases with each try.

Hydrate

Drink plenty of water during the day to keep the joints and fibres clean and lubricated. For many health reasons, it is most important for you to make an applied effort to drink sufficient water. Glug as many glasses as you can soon after getting up in the morning. And then try to drink the rest of the water spaced out during the day. This way; at least you get down some water every day even if it is not the full amount.

Lifting

Lift or lower loads only with a straight back. Get 'under' the load, heft it and then use legs to raise.

- As we get older we could have stronger arms and willpower than back and spine. So be careful; lift smoothly and test for overload.
- Never lift with spine twisted, nor by leaning over to a side; not even slightly twisted and not even lightweight stuff.

Therapies

- Use Arnica Ice (or similar) from the pharmacy or health-shop. Apply several times per day.

- Cold therapy to reduce swelling. Lie face down and apply a bag of frozen peas to the back where it is paining. Apply for a few minutes but not long enough to freeze the flesh!!! Short times and repeated often is probably better for old injuries. Manage this your self please.
- Heat therapy should Not be applied to fresh injuries because this type of therapy can bring too much fluid into the injury site and thus cause excess swelling.


Exercise 1

While standing (or sitting).

- Clasp your hands together behind your back, with fingers interlocked and palms up.
- Push hands down towards floor and also backwards to muscle limits and take a few breaths.
- Repeat several times.

This will cause a stretch in chest and shoulders and will relieve the lower and upper back. You may do this hundreds of times per day if possible.

Exercise 2

- Take a large bath towel. Fold the long edges to almost meet in the middle. Like this! 
- Roll from one of the short edges to form a 'swiss roll'.
- Lie on the floor or on a hard mattress and place the roll under the head/neck joint. (Occiput and C1/C2) The softer "gap" goes onto the neck vertebrae.
- Slide feet back along floor so that knees are pointing to ceiling.
- Park knees together so that if you fall asleep your knees will fall and wake you!

Not more than 15 minutes at a time but you may do several times a day.

This should eventually persuade your neck muscles to relax, which will cause a general relaxation response.

If you want to replace the rolled towel, a more permanent 'roll' can be made with two tennis-balls wrapped in something like a strong sock, or a denim sleeve and tied with string, wire or nylon ties to hold the tennis-balls together; like **OO** .

Be well

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