

For Your Spine - Back Exercises

Most people are aware that exercise is necessary to maintain good cardiovascular health. In addition, your exercise program should include other activities to help strengthen and condition your spine. Building a strong spine will help prevent injuries and will build bone mass to prevent osteoporosis later in life. By working to strengthen your spine, you will also be making the muscles in the back, abdomen, thighs and hips stronger and more flexible.

Spine strengthening exercises include:

- **Weight-bearing/aerobic exercises** - Exercises, such as walking, jogging, jumping rope or swimming, use gravity to put weight on your bones and muscles. The impact improves bone strength and density. That is why these kinds of exercises are so important to preventing osteoporosis. Find fun activities that you and your family can enjoy, whether riding bikes outdoors or using an exercise video.
- **Strength training exercises** - Using resistance or weights, strength training helps you strengthen bones and build muscle mass. Resistance activities, such as leg lifts or abdominal crunches, require no equipment and can be done anywhere. You can also use flexible bands to add more resistance. Weight training is also beneficial in helping build bone mass. Having the proper form is important to prevent injuries and achieve optimal results.



As always, you should see your doctor before beginning a new exercise program to ensure there are no medical conditions that would affect how you should exercise. Start your program slowly, adding repetitions or level of exertion as you progress. Take breaks as needed, and drink plenty of water.

Try to schedule your activities so they won't be crowded out of your day. It can be helpful to have an exercise buddy to keep you on your routine. Set achievable goals, and congratulate each other when you achieve them and stay on your exercise plan.

Especially if you currently suffer from back pain or problems, strengthening your spinal column can help you prevent injuries, improve flexibility and strength and minimize current back problems. You don't need any special equipment to include these activities in your routine. However, technique is very important.

You can use the following resources for a list of appropriate exercises with instructions and videos or pictures. You may also wish to hire a personal trainer who can help you focus on the correct muscles.

Simple, useful exercises for the spine with photos or videos can be found at:

www.back.com/articles-exercises.html

www.spine.org/articles/exercises.cfm

For additional advice or consultation on spinal problems, you may request a referral from your primary care physician to the Indiana Spine Group. For details, visit www.indianaspinegroup.com or call 317.228.7000.



This information is provided by Indiana Spine Group.