

4 Ways to Reduce Your Lower Back Pain



Back pain is one of the leading reasons people visit their primary care physician. There are many factors that can cause lower back pain, such as poor body mechanics, core weakness, poor posture, and/or limited flexibility. The good news is your Palomar Health physical therapists are here to help!

Overcoming lower back pain may seem like a challenge because the daily movements that involve our spine might be painful. But, what if the way we move is incorrect and causing pain? Or, maybe our posture from sitting at a desk job all day is the culprit! Or, our core muscles are weak and not stabilizing our spine properly. What about the hamstrings? Are they too tight?

Here are four things your physical therapist can teach you for reducing lower back pain:

- Strengthen weak muscles
- Move with proper form
- Improve our seated and standing posture
- Increase flexibility in tight muscles

Abdominal Bracing

Begin lying on your back with your knees bent. Pull your naval down toward your spine to contract your abdominal muscles. Be sure to breathe during the exercise, exhale as you contract and inhale as you release.

Lifting Mechanics

Proper body mechanics and lifting form are used to protect the spine.

When lifting an object from the floor to a higher surface, be sure to lift from your legs and not your back. First widen your stance, bend your knees maintaining a straight spine. Grasp the object and hold it close to your chest as you press through your legs to return to a standing position. Be sure to pivot and avoid twisting as you place the object on the higher surface.

Sitting Posture

Posture is something many of us struggle with, especially those who sit behind a desk all day long.

To support upright sitting posture, roll a small towel and place this against your chair in the small of your back. Maintain the natural curvature in your spine, avoid slouching.

Seated Hamstring Stretch

Many muscles attach to the spine and pelvic. Tight muscles can cause poor spinal movement, directly and indirectly. An evaluation by your physical therapist can determine which of your muscles

need stretching. The hamstrings, located on the back of the thigh, can often be tight from sitting for long periods of time.

Begin seated at the edge of a chair. Extend one leg straight out in front of you with your heel on the ground and flex your ankle pulling your toes towards your nose. Lengthen through your spine sitting up tall and lean forward at your waist until a stretch is felt in the back of your thigh. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds and repeat 2 times.

These four concepts, (1) core strength, (2) body mechanics, (3) posture, and (4) flexibility, are a good foundation to controlling lower back pain. Early intervention is the key to improving any condition. Visit your primary care physician and discuss your symptoms. Physical therapy is likely appropriate. After an evaluation, you and your physical therapist can make an individualized plan of care specific to your needs. Physical therapy can reduce pain, possibly reduce the amount of medications required, and get you back to your preferred activities! Why delay? Call your Physician and PT today!



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Felice graduated with her doctorate in Physical Therapy from the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences in 2011. She is a certified clinical instructor to mentor DPT students and is passionate about outpatient orthopedics. In her spare time Felice enjoys spending time with family, baking, walking on the beach and practicing yoga.