

# Recommended Exercises to Maintain a Healthy Back

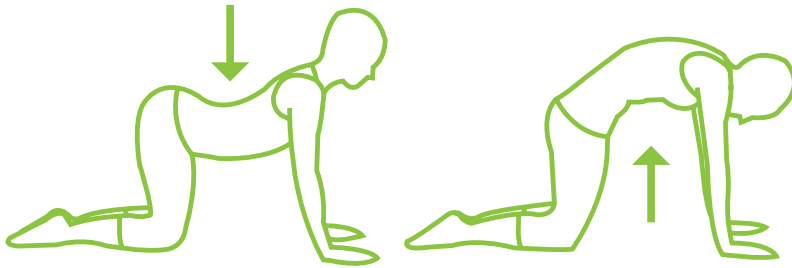
## Introduction

These exercises have been designed to be conducted alongside treatment from a practitioner at The New Surgery. They are all useful exercises for strengthening and stretching your back muscles, encouraging spinal mobility and strengthening your core muscles.

All exercises should be carried out slowly and deliberately. The slower you can make your movement the more you will benefit from the exercise. Do not start the exercise if you are experiencing pain. If you are experiencing pain whilst exercising try limiting your movements so that you are comfortable.

Remember, if you are pregnant, or if you have any concerns about your health or these exercises please speak to your practitioner at The New Surgery.

# Floor Exercises



## Exercise One: The Cat-Cow Exercise or Pelvic Tilt

1. Move onto all fours, with your hands underneath your shoulders and your knees hip-width apart.
2. Slowly drop your tummy and arch your back, sticking your bottom in the air and bringing your gaze up towards the ceiling.
3. Now slowly arch your back towards the ceiling, bringing your gaze to the floor and then between your legs.
4. Repeat these movements **10 times**.

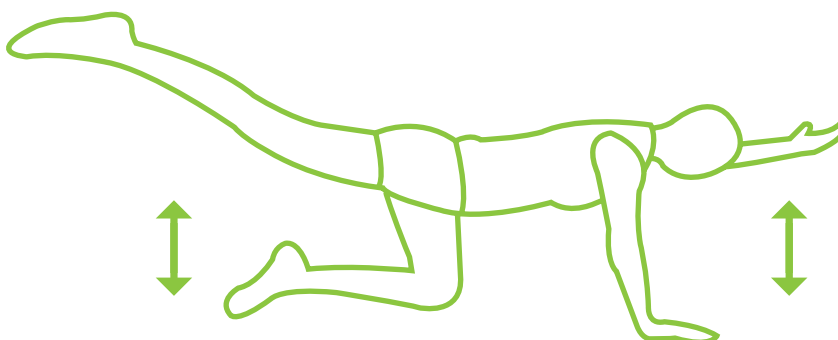
Return to a neutral spine. Remain on all fours, with your hands under your shoulders and your feet hip-width apart.



## Exercise Two: Neck Stretch

Sitting crossed legged on the floor, or sitting on a chair if that is more comfortable for you.

1. Take a deep breath and as you slowly exhale, slowly move your head to look over your left shoulder.
2. As you breath in again slowly move your head back to the starting point.
3. As you exhale again slowly move your head to look over the right shoulder.
4. As you breath in again slowly move your head back to the starting point.
5. Repeat these movements **10 times**.



## Exercise Three: Alternate Arm and Leg Raises

Move onto all fours, with your hands underneath your shoulders and your knees hip-width apart.

1. Slowly stretch one arm forward whilst you lift the opposite leg off the ground.
2. Return the leg and arm to your starting position.
3. Slowly lift your other arm forward and lift the opposite leg off the ground.
4. Return the leg and arm to your starting position.
5. Repeat these movements **10 times**.

# Exercises On Your Back

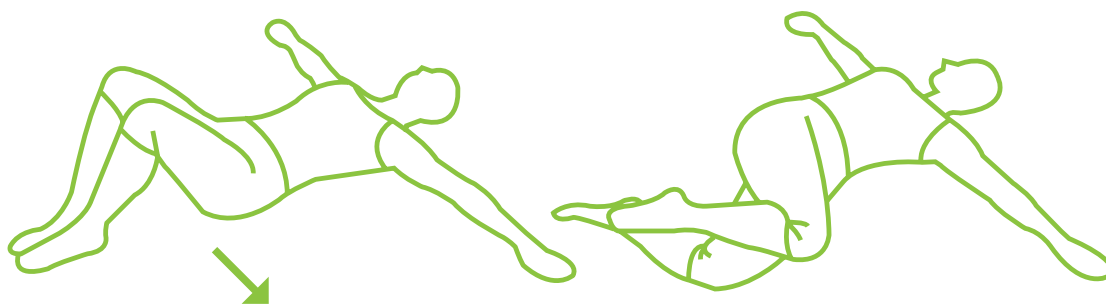
Carefully roll yourself onto your back.



## Exercise Four: Knees to Chest

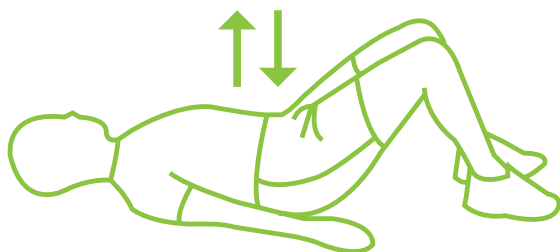
Lie on your back on a firm surface, either on the floor or a mat.

1. With your legs stretched out in front of you gently bring one knee up to your chest squeezing it gently for a count of 10.
2. Return the leg to the floor or mat.
3. Now bring your other leg up to your chest squeezing it gently for a count of 10.
4. Repeat these movements **10 times**.



## Exercise Five: Spinal Twist

1. Lying on your back, bend your knees leaving your feet on the floor, and stretch your arms out in a T shape on the floor.
2. Slowly drop your knees to the right side keeping your shoulders flat on the floor.
3. Hold for a count of 10.
4. Now slowly raise your knees up and gently drop them to the other side.
5. Hold for a count of 10.
6. Repeat this exercise **3 times** on each side.



## Exercise Six: Pelvic Tilt

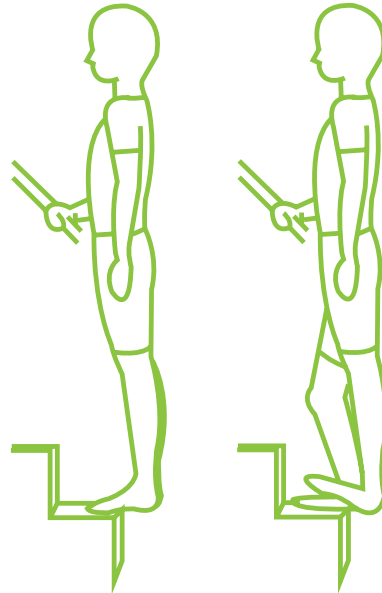
1. Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor and hip-width apart.
2. Push the small of your back into the floor by pulling your lower abdominal muscles up and pressing your belly towards the floor.
3. As you pull your muscles up, tilt your hips and slowly raise your buttock off the floor.
4. Stay in this position for a count of 5.
5. Slowly roll your buttocks back onto the floor.
6. Repeat these movements **10 times**.

# Standing Exercises

Calf muscles are really important, but we take them for granted. They are an essential part of posture. If you are not standing in a relaxed way they will tighten up. Looking after them will help relax the rest of the postural system which includes your back.

## Exercise Seven: Calf Stretch

1. Stand on the bottom step facing up the stairs.
2. Place the ball of one foot on the edge of the step with the heel hanging off the step.
3. Drop your heel down and feel your calf stretch.
4. Hold for a count of 10
5. Repeat this movement **3 times** on each side.



**Another muscle important for posture is your Hamstring, the big muscle down the back of the thigh. This exercise will help you to stretch this muscle:**

## Exercise Eight: Hamstring Stretch

1. Stand with a chair or step in front of you.
2. Place one heel with the leg straight on the step or chair.
3. Slowly try to reach forward and touch the toes of the raised leg. You don't have to be able to touch your toes – it is the stretch you want down the back of your leg.
4. Hold for a count of 10.
5. Repeat **3 times** on both sides.

