

HEALTHY LIVING

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Active Stretches

Active stretches facilitate movement and improve strength. Stretches should never cause pain, nor should you feel tingling in the extremities. **Stop immediately if you experience any discomfort.**

Leg Raises



Lie on your stomach. Tighten the muscles in one leg and raise it 1 to 2 inches from the floor. Do the same with the other leg. Repeat 20 times with each leg. This exercise may be performed several times per day.

Bridges



Lie on your back with your knees flexed and your feet flat on the floor. Keep the knees together. Tighten the muscles of the lower abdomen and buttocks; slowly raise your hips from the floor and lower your back to the resting position. Repeat this exercise 20 times. This exercise may be performed several times per day.

The Pointer



Kneel on the mat with weight on your hands and knees. Palms should be directly under your shoulders and knees hip-width apart. Slowly raise your right arm, and extend it forward parallel to the floor. Balance by contracting your abdominal muscles. Keep your right palm parallel to the floor, then lift your left leg, and straighten it behind you. Hold the opposing limbs off the ground for 30 to 60 seconds without arching your back. Switch sides. Repeat 3 to 6 times.

THE CARDIO COMPONENT



Most health care professionals recommend 20 to 30 minutes of cardiovascular exercise three to four days per week to improve endurance and help lose weight. Until you've recovered from back pain, select low-impact activities that burn calories, but won't place undue stress on your joints. Before beginning a vigorous exercise program, check with your physician to rule out any possible cardiovascular health risks.

Type of Exercise	Avg. Calories Burned (per 30 min)	Notes
Stationary Recumbent Bike	250	A safe form of cardio because you press your lower back against the seat rest at all times.
Walking	265	Walking is very gentle on the back. Avoid walking on concrete or uneven terrain.
Elliptical Trainer	300	Focus on standing upright and maintaining good posture. Don't lock your knees.
Water Therapy	270	Walking in a shallow pool can provide weightless conditioning, which minimizes stress on the back. However, for some patients, swimming can cause too much rotation of the spine. Be sure to first consult with your health care provider.

» For more information on prevention and wellness, or to find an ACA chiropractor near you, visit www.acatoday.org/patients, or follow us @ACAtoday.



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