Bone Health Exercises for Trunk and Lower Body

Rehabilitation Therapy at Home

Name ____________________________________________  Date _________________

Therapist __________________________________  Phone number _________________

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, please let us know. We provide many free services including sign language interpreters, oral interpreters, TTYs, telephone amplifiers, note takers and written materials.
Your treatment program may include weight-bearing exercise as well as training to improve posture and body mechanics (safe movement).

The exercises that follow will help improve your posture and strengthen the deep muscles that support the spine. This will help prevent broken bones and improve bone health.

**Instructions**

- Do each exercise as shown by your therapist.
- Do these exercises on a firm mattress or the floor.
- Do not hold your breath as you exercise. Breathe out as you move. Breathe in when you are in the resting (starting) position.
- You should feel the muscles working, but the exercises should not cause sharp pain. If you have pain, ease up on the movement. If you still have pain, stop.

**How often to exercise**

Do these exercises: __________________________________________________________

**Special instructions**

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☐ **Lying on back**

Lie on your back with your knees bent. Feet should be flat on the floor and pointing straight ahead. Keep your knees and feet hip-distance apart. Arms should be at your sides, slightly away from the body, palms up.

Support needed:
- ☐ Head and neck
- ☐ Knees and feet
- ☐ Arms

Stay in this position ______________________________________________________

Benefits: 1) Takes pressure off your backbone. 2) Increases comfort when lying on the back. 3) Helps relieve back pain.

☐ **Shoulder press**

Lie on your back as shown. Press your shoulders down against the floor or mattress. If it is hard to press both shoulders at the same time:

- Press one at a time. Work up to pressing both shoulders at once.
- Try moving your arms farther away from your body.

Hold 2 to 3 seconds, then relax. Repeat _______ times.

Benefits: 1) Strengthens the muscles between the shoulder blades. 2) Strengthens the muscles that extend the spine and hold your back straight. 3) Stretches the front of your chest and shoulders.
☐ **Head press**

Lie on your back as shown, with both knees bent. Do the exercise marked below.

☐ **If your head is tilted with chin up:** Tuck your chin in slightly toward the chest. Feel the stretch at the back of your neck. Feel the weight on the back of your head. Press your head down against the floor or mattress.

☐ **If your head is tilted with chin toward chest:** Tilt your chin slightly upward. Press your head down against the floor or mattress.

☐ **If your head and neck are in neutral position.** Do not tilt your head or chin. Press your head down against the floor or mattress.

Hold 2 to 3 seconds, then relax.
Repeat _______ times.

Benefits: 1) Strengthens the back of the neck. 2) Stretches the front of the neck.

☐ **Elbow press**

Lie on your back as shown, with both knees bent. Place your elbows outward, with one hand on top of the other beneath your head.

Press your elbows down against the floor or mattress. Hold 2 to 3 seconds, then relax. Repeat _______ times.

Benefits: 1) Strengthens the muscles between the shoulder blades. 2) Stretches the front of the chest and shoulders. This helps improve your shoulder posture.
☐ **Leg lengthener**

Lie on your back with knees bent, arms at your sides. Straighten one leg on the floor or mattress. Do not rotate the leg.

Pull your toes up toward the knee and push out at the heel. Make your leg longer by pulling your hip away from your rib cage.

Hold 2 to 3 seconds, then relax. Repeat _______ times with each leg.

Benefits: 1) Stretches the heel, calf, front of the hip and lower back. 2) Strengthens the thigh muscles and the muscles that pick up your foot as you walk.

☐ **Leg press**

Lie on your back with knees bent. Straighten one leg on the floor or mattress.

Pull your toes up toward the knee. Press the entire leg down against the floor or mattress. (Pretend you are lying on the beach and want to make an impression of your leg in the sand.)

Hold 2 to 3 seconds, then relax. Repeat _______ times with each leg.

Benefits: 1) Stretches the heel, calf, back of the knee and front of the hip. 2) Strengthens the buttocks, lower back, thigh and the muscles that pick up your foot when you walk.
**Buttocks squeeze**

Lie on your back with legs straight, hip-distance apart, and feet relaxed. Keep your arms at your sides or resting on your abdomen (belly).

Squeeze your buttocks muscles as tight as you can, lifting your tailbone slightly off the floor.

Hold 5 seconds.

Repeat _______ times.

Benefits: 1) Stretches the front of the hip. 2) Strengthens the buttocks, lower back and hamstring muscles.

**Chest lift**

Lie on your back with knees bent. Press both shoulders down toward the floor or mattress. At the same time, lift your mid-back (between the shoulder blades) off the floor or mattress. Don’t arch your lower back.

Hold 2 to 3 seconds, then relax. Repeat _______ times.

Benefits: 1) Strengthens the muscles between the shoulder blades. 2) Strengthens the long muscles that hold the back straight when you’re upright. 3) Relieves pressure on your mid-back.
**Bridge**

Lie on your back with knees bent. Place your arms at your sides with elbows straight, palms up.

Press your shoulders down against the floor or mattress. If you can, lift your mid-back (between the shoulder blades) off the floor or mattress. Don’t arch your lower back.

Tighten your lower belly and pelvic muscles. Then, breathe out, pressing into your the feet and lifting the hips and buttocks at the same time. Your body should be in a straight line from shoulders to knees.

Breathe evenly as you hold this position for 2 to 3 seconds. Then, slowly lower your body. Release your shoulders and relax. Repeat _______ times.

Benefits: 1) Strengthens the buttocks, belly and back muscles. 2) Stretches the front of your hips and knees.

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**Belly strengthening**

Lie on your back with knees bent. Place your hands on the front of your hipbones. Tighten your lower belly muscles.

Hold this as you pick up one foot, then the other, as if you were marching. Do not let your hipbones move. Do not let your lower back lift from the floor.

Repeat _______ times for each leg. Work up to 25 reps (repetitions).

Benefits: Strengthens your belly muscles safely without putting pressure on the spine.
☐ Shoulder blade squeeze

Lie face down with your arms at your sides, elbows straight, palms up. Your neck should be straight, with your head resting on the forehead or chin.

Press your pelvic and belly area into the floor. Squeeze your shoulder blades together as you raise your chest and head.

Hold 2 to 3 seconds, then relax.
Repeat _______ times.

Benefits: 1) Strengthens the muscles in your back and between the shoulder blades. 2) Stretches the front of the chest.

☐ Wall push-ups

Stand facing a wall, corner or doorway. Place your hands on the wall or door frame at shoulder height, a little farther apart than your shoulders. Fingers should point upward.

Keeping your body straight and elbows up, lean into the wall. Your heels should stay on the floor. (If your heels come up, move closer to the wall.) Your body should be like a board. Bend only at the elbows, wrists and ankles.

Hold 2 to 3 seconds, then push away with your arms.
Repeat _______ times.

Benefits: 1) Strengthens the muscles in the arms and between the shoulder blades. 2) Stretches the heel, chest and front of the shoulders.