Healthy Back—Healthy IU!
Week Five
Feel-good Moves for Your Back

Presented by: Mary Yoke, PhD, FACSM, MA, MM
School of Public Health, IUB
School of Health and Human Sciences, IUPUI
So your back hurts—what can you do about it?

1. If the pain is severe, or if it’s lasted longer than two weeks and has caused you significant disability, see your doctor! Numbness and weakness in your legs, or bowel and bladder problems, can be a sign of nerve damage and needs to be checked out. You could also consider chiropractic treatment and/or physical therapy.
So your back hurts—what can you do about it?

2. Practice **correctly performing** the **everyday moves** covered in **week three**.

- Sitting
- Standing
- Sleeping
- Lifting and bending over

3. Avoid risky moves and exercises!
In order for your back to recover from a muscle strain, it needs to rest in neutral as much as possible!
So your back hurts—what can you do about it?

3. Explore various **pain management strategies**. These can include:
   - Rest
   - Ice or heat
   - Over-the-counter **pain** relievers
   - Jacuzzi/whirlpool
   - Massage
   - Acupuncture
   - Self-traction
   - Stretching
   - Cardio
Massage Options

- Foam rollers
- Massage ball
- Kneading fingers
So your back hurts—what can you do about it?

4. Try some **Feel-Good Moves**
   - Shoulder rolls
   - Neck moves
   - Side bends
   - Round and release (add a chest stretch)
   - Twist (spine straight)
   - Wrist rolls and finger stretches
   - Windshield wiper move with lower body (add upper body moves)
   - Ankle rolls, point and flex, wiggle toes
See if you can figure out what moves really feel good to your back

- If you notice that one position clearly feels better than the other, then avoid the position that doesn’t feel right, and practice moves in the position that feels the best.

- If both positions feel fine, then gently and slowly move back and forth

- In yoga, you inhale when the head and hips are up, and exhale when the head and hips curve down
So your back hurts—what can you do about it?

5. Engage in a conservative back exercise program.
   - if a move hurts, don’t do it!
   - avoid doing too much, too soon
   - do a little bit every day
If your back feels good in spinal flexion, here are some **Spinal Flexion Moves**

- **Stretches**
- **Strengtheners**
If your back feels good in spinal extension, here are some **Spinal Extension Moves**

**Stretches**

**Strengtheners**

Do repetitions
Spinal Moves

A healthy spine is able to do four main joint actions:

1. Spinal flexion (forward)
2. Spinal extension (backward)
3. Spinal lateral flexion (sideways)
4. Spinal rotation (twist)

Spinal traction

During normal daily activities, the pressure inside the lumbar discs typically ranges between 100 mmHg to 350 mmHg.

Spinal Disc: Decompression can reduce the pressure inside the discs to approximately 150 mmHg, reducing disc herniations and help by drawing in necessary fluids and nutrients.
STRETCHING and Mobility Moves:

- We want them to always feel good!
- You should know you’re stretching, but the stretch does NOT hurt—find the place where your body says, “I need this; it feels right for me in this moment.” If something hurts, don’t do it!
- Feel free to do micro-moves/adjustments/shifts until you find the best version of the stretch for you. Move slowly.
- Once you’ve found the right place, take 3-5 deep, slow, mindful breaths

Hip flexor stretch (press the straight leg down); tight hip flexors can lead to back pain

Mobility moves for the spine
Hip Flexor (AKA iliopsoas) Info:

- Tight hip flexors are common due to too much sitting! Almost everyone needs to stretch the hip flexors…
Additional Stretches and Moves that can help your back

Figure 4: hip & glute stretches

Round and release

Hip flexor stretches
Additional Stretches and Moves that can help your back

- Hamstring stretches
- Hip and glute stretches
- Multi-muscle stretches
Lateral flexion and rotational moves for the spine

Twisting stretches

Side bend stretches
Remember the Core Stability Exercises from Week Four?
Feel-good Positions for Resting Your Spine: Experiment until you find one that feels blissful!
Remember to engage in aerobic activity (repetitive, multi-muscle moves for > 10 minutes, 3-5x/week)

- Cardio moves can be helpful to get blood and nutrients flowing to the spine, relieve stiffness, and improve your mood!
Make a Plan!

This week I will _____________________

Examples:

1) This week, on Monday, I will experiment with cat and cow stretches and find out whether my spine prefers one position or the other, or whether both positions feel fine. If there is a preference, I will choose three moves in the position that feels best and do them on at least 4 days.

2) This week, especially when I’m sitting, I will continue to be mindful and catch myself whenever I start to slouch. I will then stand up and practice good neck, back, and shoulder blade alignment against the wall. To help me remember, I will set a timer for every 10-15 minutes on M/W/F.

3) This week, whenever my back feels tired and sore, I will experiment with some self-traction and/or massage devices.
# Make a Plan!

## Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hamstring stretch, cat &amp; cow stretches, spinal twist (5 min)</td>
<td>Core stability: Plank, bird dog, bridge (5-10 min)</td>
<td>Hamstring stretch, cat &amp; cow stretches, spinal twist (5 min)</td>
<td>Core stability: plank, bird dog, bridge (5-10 min)</td>
<td>Hamstring stretch, cat &amp; cow stretches, spinal twist (5 min)</td>
<td>Go for a walk (15-30 min)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice neutral alignment (5 min)</td>
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<td>Practice neutral alignment (5 min)</td>
<td>Practice neutral alignment (5 min)</td>
<td>Kitchen sink traction (2 min)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll on a roller or ball (2-5 min)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• Stay mindful and self-aware.
• You can retrain your body to do the right thing and reduce your risk of back pain!

Good Luck!
This Presentation Was Brought to You By:

MOVE MORE...SIT LESS...FEEL GREAT!