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**TREATING BACK PAIN WITH THE MCKENZIE METHOD**

The McKenzie Method was developed in the 1960's by Robin McKenzie, a physical therapist in New Zealand. While much time has passed since then, his exercises still form the cornerstone of treatment for both neck and back pain. What follows are his core exercises for treating neck pain. His book, currently in its fifth edition is available at chapters.

From Robin McKenzie's book *Treat Your Own Back*

These exercises should give relief from most types of neck pain as well as prevent recurrence of future episodes. Always consult with a medical health professional before embarking on any series of exercises if your pain is severe or if these exercises exacerbate your pain.

Perform the four exercises below in a stepwise progression. Progress to the next exercise only when the pain from the previous exercise decreases. If symptoms intensify (increased pain, numbness or tingling) in either or both legs, discontinue the exercise. If symptoms diminish in the legs, continue as instructed even if accompanied by a temporary increase in low back pain.



***Step 1: Lying on stomach***

Lay on stomach with arms under your shoulders or down at your side.

Head facing down or turned to one side.

Take deep breath and relax. Hold 5 min.

***Frequency:*** 1-2 times per day

***Step 2: Lying on pillow***

Lay on stomach with arms at your side with a pillow placed directly under chest.

Head facing down or turned to one side.

Take deep breath and relax. Hold 5 min.

***Frequency:*** 1-2 times per day



***Step 3: Prone on elbows***

Lay on stomach, place your elbows under your shoulders so you are resting on your forearms.

Take deep breath and relax. Hold 30 sec, repeat 10 times.

***Frequency:*** 1-2 times per day

***Step 4: Prone Press-ups***

Lay on stomach, place your hands under your shoulders. Slowly straighten elbows, keeping lower body relax while raising the back upwards as far as pain will allow.

Hold 10 sec, repeat 10 times.

***Frequency:*** 1-2 times per day



*Finding Pelvic Neutral*

Tighten AB muscles, draw belly button in, flatten your back.

**Technique:** Hiss like a snake / Say the letter "S". 'ssssss'

Try to pull out towel with your hand.

A proper core contraction should prevent the towel from moving.

This is your starting position for all core exercises!



*Quadruped*

Find Pelvic Neutral.

Extend one arm, extend opposite leg.

Hold 10 sec. Change arms/legs.

Keep hips level, avoid back extension.

**Frequency:** 1 max set. Once a day.

**Rationale:** Core control with movement.



*Prone Plank*

Find Pelvic Neutral.

Balance on Elbows. Squeeze Gluts.

Hold Position. Avoid Back Extension.

**Frequency:** 1 max set. Once a day.

**GOAL:** **Good:** 2 m. **Great:** 3-5 m.

**Rationale:** Entire Core Muscles.



*Superman*

Lie on stomach with arm extended overhead

Extend arms and legs. Arms parallel to ears.

Hold Position 10sec. Avoid excessive back extension.

**Frequency:** 1 max set. Once a day.

**Rationale:** Glut, Hamstring, Back Muscles.



*Double Leg Bridge*

Slow raise hips up towards the ceiling

Hold 5 sec.

**Frequency:** 1 max set. Once a day

**Goal:** **Increase gluteal strength**