

Back Exercises to Help Keep You Strong During Pregnancy

Back pain is very common when you are pregnant. You can do these back exercises to lessen your back pain. These exercises will also strengthen your body to get ready for labor.

Knee-Chest Twist

This exercise will stretch your back.

- Find a hard surface to lay down on.
- Lie down on your back.
- Pull your knees towards your chest.
- Stretch your arms straight out to your sides.
- Roll your knees to one side and turn your head to the other side of your body.
- Do the same stretch on the other side of your body.
- Gradually work up to **10 repetitions (5 on each side)**.



Pelvic Tilt

This stretch will help to gently strengthen your lower back. It will lessen your hip and lower back pain. It will help with pain around your uterus (round ligament pain). You can do it on the floor or against the wall.

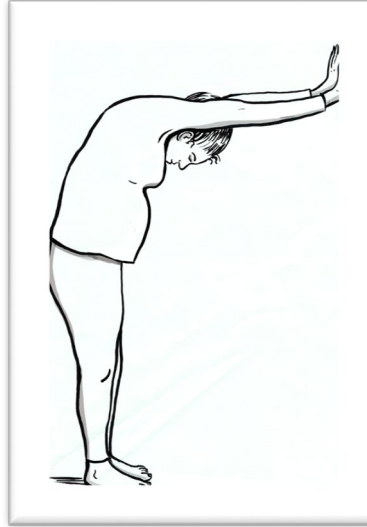
On the floor:

- Rest your hands and knees on the floor. Make sure your head is in line with your back.
- Pull in your stomach by rounding your back a little bit. **Don't** let your back sag. Hold this position for at least 10 seconds.
- Relax your stomach and back — keeping your back as flat as possible.
- Repeat this exercise **5 times**.



Against the wall:

- Push your hands against the wall.
- Curve your back out (arch like a cat).
- Flatten your back to relax.
- Repeat this exercise **5 times**.



Bridge

This exercise gives you a gentle stretch for your hip flexors. It can help strengthen your lower back, stomach, and butt muscles. It can help relieve hip and lower back aches and pains.

- Find a hard surface to lay down.
- Lay on your back with your arms stretched out to each side. Make sure your feet are hip distance apart.
- Flatten your back against the floor.
- Focus on your core and lift your butt up as high as you can to make a straight line.
- Keep your weight on your shoulders and feet.

Don't overarch you back.

- While your back is lifted, point your toes so the balls of your feet are off the floor and hold this for 30 seconds.
- Flatten your feet and continue holding the bridge for as long as it is comfortable.
- Take 3 to 5 deep breathes in this position.
- Slowly lower your back by starting from your neck down to your lower back. It should take up to 1 minute to lower your body down.
- Move your head from right side to your left side to release pressure after you are on the ground completely.
- Repeat this exercise **3 to 5 times**.



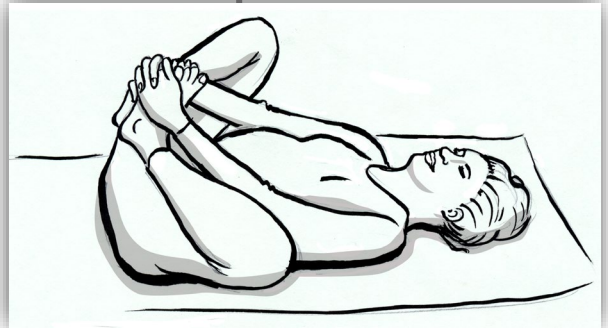
Lower Back Rocker

This exercise stretches your lower back and hips.

- Find a hard surface to lay down. Lie down on your back.
- Bring each knee to either side of your stomach.
- Put your hands below your knees.
- Gently rock from your right side to your left side.

This will massage your lower back.

- **Take 3 to 4 deep breaths** in this position or hold it for up to a minute.
- Place the bottoms of your feet together with knees to sides and hands on your ankles. This will stretch your inner thighs, hips, and back.
- Gently rock from your right side to your left side.
- **Take 3 to 5 deep breaths** in this position or hold it for up to a minute.
- After rocking for 1 to 2 minutes lay on you left side.
Take 1 to 2 deep relaxing breaths.



Twisting

This exercise will help stretch and relieve tension from the entire back. Do this exercise with your partner, a family member, or a friend.

- You and a partner should sit with your backs touching each other.
- Bend your knees and cross your ankles or put the soles of your feet together.
- Stretch your arms out sideways and hold your partner's hands.
- Twist your body and arms from your right side to your left side.
- Make sure you turn your head and eyes too. Keep a firm touch between your backs.
- Repeat this exercise **up to 10 times**.



Side Bending

This exercise stretches your sides.

- Sit back to back with a partner. Make sure your backs are touching.
- Bend your knees and cross your ankles or put the soles of your feet together.
- Stretch out your arms and hold hands with your partner.
- Bend from your right side and then your left side. You are still holding the hands of your partner.
- Put your elbow on to the floor when you bend to each side. Try to keep your butt and your partners butt on the floor.
- Remember to maintain the pressure between your backs.
- Repeat this exercise **up to 10 times**.



Relaxation

This exercise stretches your chest and upper back.

- Sit back to back with a partner. Make sure your lower back touches your partner's back.
- Your partner should lean forward to support **you while you lean back**.
- Lean back with your head and shoulders supported. Make sure you open your chest by keeping your hands at your side.
- **Take 3 to 5 breaths** in this position.
- Slowly move back to an upright position with your partner.

