

BackTrac[®]



Back Pain Relief Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
<i>Dr. David Vitko</i>	3
 GENERAL PRINCIPLES	 4
<i>Lower Back</i>	5
<i>Neck and Upper Back</i>	5
<i>Ice</i>	5
 STRETCHING	 6
<i>Knee Hug</i>	7
<i>Overhead Floor Crunch</i>	7
<i>Supine Knee Roll-over</i>	8
<i>Hamstring Stretch</i>	8
<i>Prone on Elbows</i>	9
<i>Prone Extension Stretch</i>	9
<i>Scary Cat Back and Old Horse Stretch</i>	10
<i>Lumbar Flexion Stretch on Physio Ball</i>	10
<i>Lumbar Extension Stretch on Physio Ball</i>	11
<i>Standing Shoulder Shrug</i>	11
<i>Supine Shoulder Blade Squeeze</i>	12
<i>Lumbar Range Of Motion</i>	12
<i>Lumbar Flex</i>	13
<i>Neck Isometrics</i>	13
 STRENGTHENING	 14
<i>Supine Curl Chin</i>	15
<i>Leg Raise</i>	15
<i>Side Bending Trunk Curl Up</i>	16
<i>Prone Leg Lifts</i>	16
<i>Standing Squats</i>	17
<i>On Belly Neck Raise vs. Gravity</i>	17
<i>Supine Neck Curl With Towel</i>	18
<i>Side-Lying Head Raise</i>	18

INTRODUCTION



Dr. David Vitko

Dr. David M. Vitko has been practicing Chiropractic in Columbiana, OH since 1986. He primarily treats spinal disc injuries including slipped, ruptured, bulging, or herniated discs, as well as most simple musculoskeletal injuries.

Dr. Vitko has developed a practice with emphasis on preventing the reoccurrence of back pain, sciatica, and radicular symptoms of the upper and lower extremities. He has developed novel techniques that can significantly decrease common degenerative changes known to weaken the spine and predispose patients to re-injury.

He is the inventor of the BackTrac Back Massager and home treatment system for backs. He was awarded several US Patents for related inventions. Dr. Vitko is the author of “Perfect Cholesterol In Just 3 Weeks (without drugs!)”, a book describing a proven approach to significantly lowering Cholesterol and improving health, without the cost and risk of prescription drugs. He is still in private practice in Columbiana, OH.

General Principles

To Relieve Back and Neck Pain

General principles based upon Dr. David Vitko's 30+ years of helping patients treat their own back pain at home. These are the suggestions Dr. Vitko provides to his patients and has found to work in the vast majority of uncomplicated back pain cases. Most back pain can be successfully relieved at home. However, if back pain does not begin to improve within a week, or if pain is getting worse, you need to see a Physician for diagnosis to rule out significant underlying health issues.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Lower Back

Lie on your back with legs bent and feet on the floor or lower legs on a foot stool.

- *This position reduces pressure inside spinal discs and relieves tension on facet joints in the spine. It also allows muscles to relax after several minutes.*

Neck and Upper Back

Lie on your back with a rolled up towel under your neck. The towel should be of sufficient diameter so that your neck is extended back over it and your head suspended slightly off the bed or floor.

- *This position supports the neck in its normal lordosis (forward curve), reduces pressure in the spinal discs and relieves tension on facet joints in the spine. It will also allow muscles to relax after several minutes.*
- *By suspending your head slightly off the bed or floor, you will actually apply a very mild traction to your neck while lying in this position.*

When you have back or neck pain, exercises should focus more on stretching. Once you begin to experience significant relief, strengthening can help to prevent future reoccurrence of pain. Many people make the mistake of trying to strengthen supportive tissues while pain and inflammation are still raging in the back and neck. Many exercises can actually aggravate pain and prolong the healing process.

- *A good rule of thumb is that if an exercise causes hard pain, avoid that exercise until pain has been sufficiently reduced so it can be performed without aggravation of pain.*

Ice

It has been Dr. Vitko's experience that most pain and inflammation respond best with ice treatments. If ice is too cold to be tolerated, a cool, damp compress is a good option.

- *Ice is best applied by using a reusable gel ice pack. Wrap the ice pack in one layer of towel to avoid frosting of the skin.*

Ice application should be limited to:

- *30 minutes for thicker areas like the lower back and gluteals (buttocks)*
- *15 minutes for smaller areas like the neck and upper thoracic (upper back)*
- *Ice can be applied several times a day but at least 1 hour should be left between treatments for the skin and other tissues to warm up naturally as normal circulation returns.*

Ice, rest, and motion without load is a good general approach to reducing back pain at home.

Stretching

Stretching can help to reduce back pain. The stretches outlined in this guide are intended to help stretch areas where typical back pain exists. All stretches should be held for a minimum count of 30 seconds for the best results.

STRETCHING

Knee Hug



Lie on your back with legs extended and heels on the floor. Raise one leg to your chest, bending at the knee. Wrap your arms around the leg and squeeze for a count of 30 seconds and then switch legs. Next, do this with both legs together.

- *This stretch reduces tension in the lower back muscles that work so hard for us all day long. It is a great way to balance the muscle tension in the lower back.*

Supine Knee Roll-over



Lie on your back with arms straight out to your sides and bring your knees up until your thighs are perpendicular to the floor. Roll your knees toward_ the right until you feel a slight stretch. Hold this position and allow things to stretch. Then repeat on the other side. This stretch should be slow and sustained. Do not jerk or attempt to “crack” the lower back with excessive force.

- *This stretches muscle groups of the lower trunk and puts gentle motion through the facet joints of the lumbar spine.*

STRETCHING

Hamstring Stretch



Lie flat on your back on the floor or bed. While holding on to one end of a stretch band or belt, bend one leg and bring your foot up to securely loop the stretch band around it. Now slowly straighten that leg up into the air. Use the stretch band to gently pull the leg up toward your head while keeping the leg straight. You will feel a significant stretch behind your knee and in the back of your thigh. Hold this stretch for at least 30 seconds. Repeat with the other leg. The goal should be to gradually lengthen your hamstrings to allow you to approximate your foot to your head.

- *This exercise will help to reduce tension the hamstrings exert on your pelvis. Done regularly, this will decrease and balance tension in your lower back muscles. Most experts agree this is critical to improving lower back function.*

Prone on Elbows



Begin lying on your stomach, then gently prop yourself up onto your forearms, remain there until your back has relaxed. Hold for 30 seconds. Return to prone position and rest. Repeat 2-3 times.

- *This stretches abdominal muscles and begins to stretch psoas muscles*

STRETCHING

Prone Extension Stretch



Begin this stretch lying on your stomach with your hands in the press up position as demonstrated. Gently straighten your elbows while keeping your pelvis on the floor, letting your back fall into an arch. Keep your abdominals and back relaxed. Straighten your elbows as far as possible and comfortable without pain. Hold for 30 seconds then slowly lower yourself down flat.

- *This stretches lower back discs, psoas, and other lumbar and abdominal muscle groups. It is a great stretch to perform every day to improve overall back function.*

Scary Cat Back and Old Horse Stretch



Begin on your hands and knees, both spaced about a shoulder-width apart. Pull your abs in, hunch arching your back skyward to resemble a cat arching its back. Done properly you should feel a good stretch in your lower back. Hold the stretch and then release to the starting position. Now stretch in the opposite direction forcing your belly downward toward the floor. This should create a dip in your lower back that might resemble a “sway-back horse”. You should now feel a different stretch in your lower back. Hold for 30 seconds and return to the starting position.

- *This is a great general stretch to relieve lower back tension and help to balance flexor and extensor muscle groups in that part of the anatomy.*

STRETCHING

Lumbar Flexion Stretch on Physio Ball



Kneel on the floor using a mat or kneeling pad and gradually push forward until the ball is under your stomach and your spine is arched. Your arms should relax and hang down the sides of the ball to aid in balance. Gently roll forward consciously allowing your head and arms to hang loosely on one side and legs loosely on the other. You should feel a gentle stretch in your lower back. Remain in this position, breathing in and out slowly feeling a little more stretch each time you exhale. Now slowly roll forward and backward across the ball while relaxing. This stretch can be done to your comfort level time-wise. Some like to do this while watching their favorite TV show. It can be great for the spine!

- *Great all around spine and back muscle stretch.*

Lumbar Extension Stretch on Physio Ball



Carefully sit on ball with ample room all around and to the front of you. Slowly walk your feet forward while lying back on the ball (keeping your balance) until you are lying on the ball on your mid to lower back. Remain here for 30 seconds or so while allowing your back to arch backwards over the ball. Be careful not to fall off the ball. You can then use your legs to roll slightly forward and back to increase stretch.

- *This is an amazing stretch for the psoas muscles deep inside your lumbar spine. They are notoriously difficult to stretch, but using this technique can pay big rewards over time and with repetition.*

STRETCHING

Standing Shoulder Shrug



Stand up straight with good posture and arms hanging at your sides. Raise your shoulders as high as you can get them, as if attempting to touch your ears with them. Hold for a count of five. Release back into relaxed position. Repeat 10 reps.

Now raise shoulders and rotate them forward, down, back, and up as if rotating shoulder joint around an axis. Repeat 3-4 times every day.

- *This is a great tension reliever in the upper back and neck areas. It should be done regularly as a means of preventing muscular stress buildup that can cause neck pain and headaches when left unchecked.*

Supine Shoulder Blade Squeeze



Begin lying on your back with your arms above your head and flat on floor or bed. While keeping everything “flat” to the floor, slowly pull your elbows down and in toward your hips. Pretend you have an egg between your shoulder blades. Try to crush that egg by squeezing your shoulder blades together. Tense these muscles and hold for a count of 10. Rest a bit and then repeat. Try to perform this exercise several times a day.

- *Most of what we do each day tenses anterior deltoid and pec muscles. This exercise helps to reduce the tension in these muscles while toning their antagonists.*

STRETCHING

Lumbar Range of Motion



Stand up straight with good posture and arms to your side. Lean to the side reaching down the leg keeping your head facing forward. Hold for a count of two and return to the start position and repeat 5 times. Then switch sides. Next, with your hands on your hips, twist your torso keeping your legs in place and hold the stretch for a count of two and return to start and repeat 5 times, then switch sides.

- *This exercise helps to put gentle motion through the lower back facet joints and muscles.*

Lumbar Flex



Begin standing with good posture. Bend forward at the waist keeping your back straight. Bend to comfort. If you feel pain, stop. Hold for a count of 5 and repeat.

- *This exercise helps to stretch lower back muscles and hamstrings in the backs of your legs. Do it slowly and do not bounce when hanging! A slow stretch is best.*

STRETCHING

Neck Isometrics



In these exercises you will be pushing your head against your hands in each of the cervical ranges of motion.

Begin with your head in a neutral position (straight). Place your right hand against the right side of your head just behind your temple with your elbow pointing away from your hand. Use your head to press against your hand pushing your head to the right. But don't let your hand move. Hold pressure against your hand for a slow count to 10. Do this in each of the 4 directions your head normally moves. (right, left, forward, back) Lastly, clasp your hands over your head with your palms just behind your temples. Now attempt to turn your head against your right hand. Hold for 10 seconds. Then repeat this against your left hand and hold for 10 seconds.

- *This isometric exercise temporarily fatigues the muscles in your neck. It can quickly relieve muscle tension in the neck and can temporarily improve tension headaches that originate in the cervical spine. Many people like to do this in a warm shower.*

Performing this isometric exercise daily can gradually tone cervical muscles which can help to add stability to the cervical spine. This is especially important as we age and lose muscle mass and tone.

Strengthening

Strengthening exercises help stabilize the spine and decrease stress on the lower back and pelvis. Most spinal stabilization exercise programs include strengthening both the abdominal and gluteal muscles. The key is an exercise program that is simple and easily done.

STRENGTHENING

Supine Chin Curl



Start by laying on your back with your legs bent and hands resting on your belly. Slowly lift your head from the floor curling up in one continuous motion until your shoulder blades are just off the floor, while keeping your chin tucked close to your chest. Hold this position for 10 seconds. Return to start and repeat. Strive for 10 repetitions 1 to 2 times per day.

- *This exercise strengthens cervical flexor and upper abdominal muscles. It is a valuable tool to help stabilize the spine at both ends.*

Leg Raise



Start on your back with your legs out straight. Lift your legs off the ground by contracting your abdominal muscles. While holding your legs in this position, bend your legs at the knee and bring your knees to your chest, and back out. Return to start, and repeat for 10 repetitions if possible.

- *This exercise will strengthen lower abdominal muscles, helping to add stability and core strength to the lumbar spine.*

STRENGTHENING

Side Bending Trunk Curl Up



Lie on your side with legs bent and hand resting on your side. Slowly lift your head from the floor curling up and slide hand down side of leg until your shoulder is slightly off floor. Return to start and repeat. Switch sides. Try for 6-10 repetitions each side.

- *This exercise helps strengthen cervical flexors and oblique abdominal muscles. It can help to add stability to both the cervical and lumbar spine.*

Prone Leg Lifts



Start on your belly with your legs bent up at the knee behind you. Lift one leg off the ground at a time. Return to start, and repeat for 10 reps each side.

- *This exercise will strengthen and tone buttocks and other hip extensors in the upper leg.*

STRENGTHENING

Standing Squats



Start in a standing position with the feet shoulder width apart and arms out front. Slowly bend your knees as if you were going to sit in a chair. Keep your back straight with your upper body directly above your feet. Slowly rise, returning to the starting position. Repeat 20 times.

- *This is a fantastic overall exercise to keep legs strong and maintain better balance as you age. It is never too early or too late to start!*

On Belly Neck Raise vs. Gravity



Start on your belly lying flat on the bed or floor. Raise your head curling your neck backward and lift your shoulders slightly. Hold for a count of 5 seconds and return to start. Repeat for 10 repetitions.

- *This exercise strengthens neck extensor muscles.*

STRENGTHENING

Supine Neck Curl With Towel



Start with a towel rolled up under your neck while lying on your back with your legs flexed and your feet flat on the floor. Slowly raise your head curling your chin to your chest while keeping your shoulders on the floor and your back straight. Hold for a count of 5 seconds. Return to start and repeat.

- *This exercise strengthens and tones neck flexors, tightening tissues under the chin as well. It starts in an anatomically supported position with a towel supporting the normal cervical curve (lordosis).*

Side-Lying Head Raise



Start by lying on your side with your legs bent and bottom arm overhead. You can rest your head on your arm. Slowly raise your head. Hold for a count of 5 seconds and return to start. Repeat for 10 repetitions. Turn over to do the other side.

- *This exercise strengthens lateral neck flexor muscles, tones cervical muscles, and improves neck stability.*

STRENGTHENING

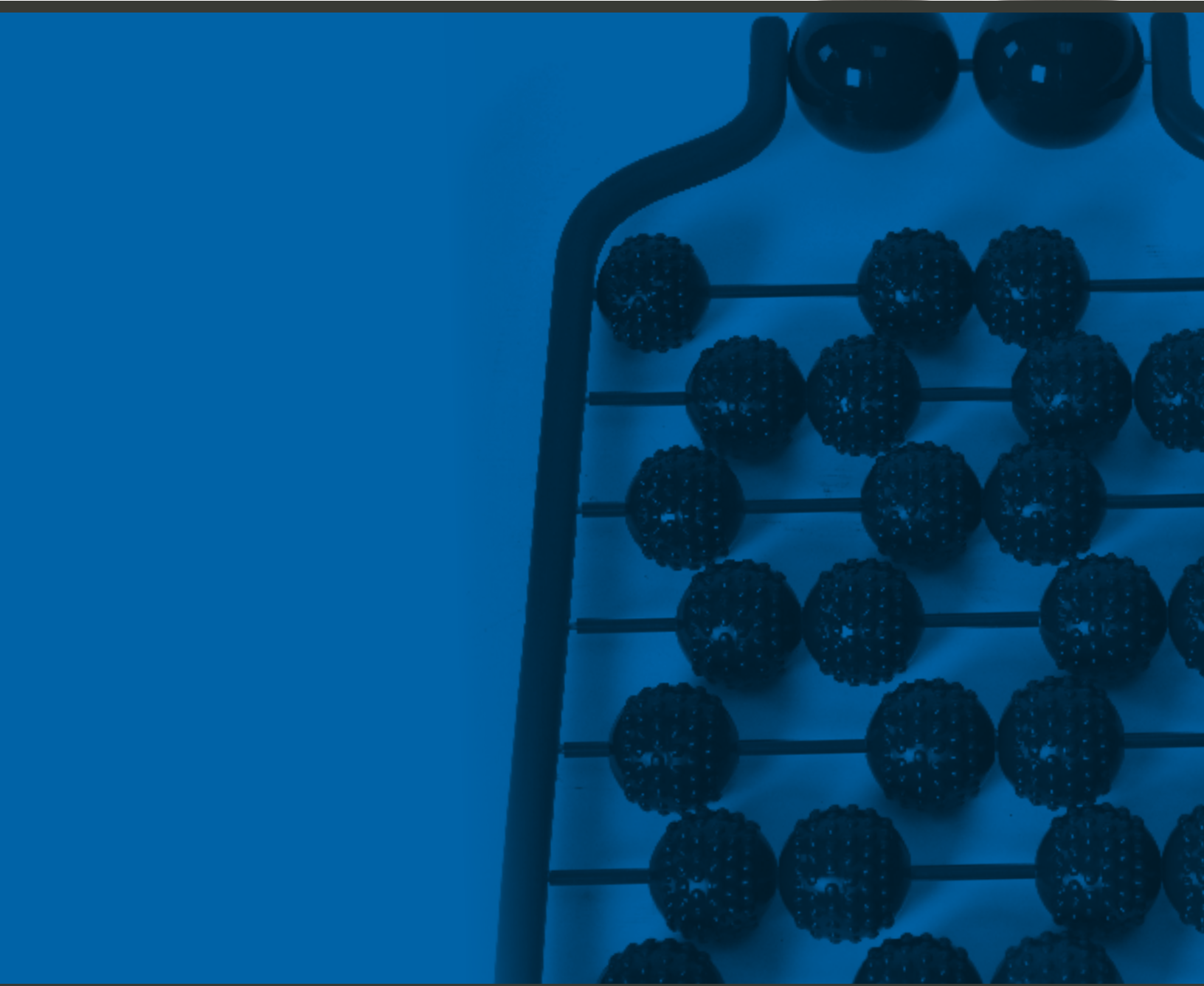
Overhead Floor Crunch



Lie on your back with legs bent at 90 degrees and feet on the floor. Raise your arms straight out in front of you. Reach for the sky lifting your head, shoulders, and upper back off the floor. Lower back to the start and repeat.

- *This exercise will strengthen abdominal muscles, helping to add stability and core strength to the spine.*

BackTrac®



BackTrac®

www.staminaproducts.com/backtrac