

Exercises for your back.

Work wellness tips from NYL GBS Healthy Working Life.

Our hips and lower back endure a lot of stress when we sit for long periods of time. Stretch them out to help relieve pain and tension.

1 Cat camel



Step 1: Stand with your legs hip-width apart and your toes straight. Put your hands on your knees.

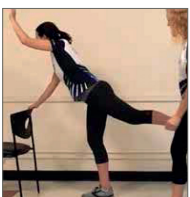
Step 2: Round your back upward and tuck your pelvis underneath you.

Step 3: Reverse it. Arch your back inward and roll your butt out.

Step 4: Repeat 20 times.



2 Bird dog



Step 1: Stand with both hands placed on the top of the back of a chair.

Step 2: Lift the same hand and foot toward the ceiling.

Step 3: Repeat with the other leg.

***Tip:** Keep the leg on the ground bent, your stomach tight and your shoulders down.

3 Wall plank



Step 1: Place both forearms on a wall with your fists at your forehead.

Step 2: Lean in and hold for one minute.

Challenge: Stand on your toes. If you're looking for even more of a challenge, lift one leg up behind you.

4 Side wall plank



Step 1: Stand with one shoulder facing a wall.

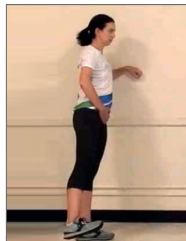
Step 2: Place your nearest forearm on the wall at shoulder level.

Step 3: Lean in, lift your outside leg away from the wall and hold.

Step 4: Repeat on your other side.

Challenge: Move your feet farther away from the wall. For more of a challenge, lift your outside leg up and down 10-20 times.

Caution: Avoid this exercise if it irritates your shoulder.



5 Pelvic tilt



Step 1: Tuck your pelvis underneath you and pull in your stomach.

Step 2: Release.

6 Back bend



Step 1: Put your hands on your lower back and pull in your stomach.

Step 2: Arch your back and look slightly upward.

Step 3: Repeat 10 times.

***Tip:** Try not to crunch the back of your neck.

7 Hip flexor stretch



Step 1: Kneel with one leg bent in front of you at 90 degrees.

Step 2: Pull your hips forward and tighten your glutes while lifting the opposite arm as high as possible.



Step 3: Repeat two to four times on each side.

8 Press ups



Step 1: Lie flat on the floor.

Step 2: Place your elbows directly beneath your shoulders.

Step 3: Lift yourself up on your elbows and toes and hold.

9 Piriformis stretch



Step 1: Lie on your back with your knees bent toward the ceiling.

Step 2: Place one ankle on your opposite knee.

Step 3: Bring your other foot off the floor and hold.

Step 4: Repeat with your other leg.

***Tip:** Be sure to keep both hips on the ground.



Challenge: Place your hands on your closest knee and pull towards your chest. For more of a challenge, put your arms through your legs and pull your leg towards you.

10 Hamstring stretch



Step 1: Lie on your back with your hips in a doorway.

Step 2: Put one foot up on the wall of the doorway as high as you can. Hold for up to one minute.

Step 3: Repeat with your other leg.

11 Clam shell



Step 1: Lie on your side with legs bent, one on top of the other. Your heels should be in line with your back.

Step 2: Raise your top knee toward the ceiling. Hold for one minute.

Step 3: Repeat three times on each leg.



12 Side lying leg lift



Step 1: Lie on your side with your bottom leg bent and your top leg straight.



Step 2: Lift your top leg until it's parallel with your spine and hold.

Step 3: Lower without touching the ground.

Step 4: Repeat 10 times on each leg.



Challenge: Straighten both legs. Lift the top leg, and then the bottom leg to meet it. Raise and lower the bottom leg 20 times. Complete three sets. For an extra challenge, try raising and lowering both legs together.

13 Back bridge



Step 1: Lie with your back on the floor and your knees bent toward the ceiling.

Step 2: Squeeze your glutes to lift your hips, hold, and lower down.

***Tip:** Make sure your knees are driving forward, your rib cage stays low and your hips are square.



Challenge: Straighten and lift one leg until it's level with your other knee. Lift your hips 10-20 times and switch.

14 Cat camel variation



Step 1: Get down on your hands and knees, with your knees directly under your hips and your hands directly under your shoulders.

Step 2: Round your back and tuck your pelvis underneath you.

Step 3: Reverse it. Arch your back inward and roll your butt outward.

Step 4: Repeat 20 times.

Caution: Skip this exercise if you feel any knee pain.



15 Bird dog variation



Step 1: Get down on your hands and knees, with your knees directly under your hips and your hands directly under your shoulders.

Step 2: Lift one hand and the opposite foot toward the ceiling.

Step 3: Repeat with other leg.



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