

It can be painful or difficult to move in certain ways when you have a back problem. Some movements cause your back to arch a lot, while others cause your back to round too much. Your back will feel most comfortable moving in the middle between arched and rounded. This is your functional range of movement. The more you keep your back in this functional range of movement, the better you will feel. There are movement strategies you can learn and use to keep your back in the functional range as you reach, bend, lift and turn. This will help reduce your pain.

When you reach overhead into the cupboard, or to wash your hair, or while you kneel to garden, your back will want to arch. To keep your back in the functional range, practice the following movement strategies; first in the lying position (A), then on all fours (B), then in the standing position (C).



Strategy (A): reaching overhead

- Lie on your back with knees bent.
- Tighten your stomach and buttock muscles.
- As you reach over your head, gradually flatten your low back toward the floor.

Strategy (B): working on the ground

- Start on your hands and knees.
- Move your hips forward in front of your knees.
- As you move forward, gradually tuck your rear end under.
- Tighten your buttock and stomach muscles.



Strategy (C): reaching overhead

- Reach over your head while standing. You can use a ball, as shown.
- As your hands go up, tuck your rear-end under gradually to flatten your low back.
- Tighten your stomach and buttock muscles.

Additional Instructions:

MOVEMENT STRATEGIES FOR LOW BACK PAIN

When you bend and reach forward, such as when you lean over the bathroom sink, or when you bend or squat to lift something, or when you are gardening, your back will want to round. To keep your back in a good position, practice the following movement strategies; first in the lying position (A), then in the hands and knees position (B), then in the standing/squatting position (C).



Strategy (A): practice for reaching forward or down

- As you reach towards your knees, gently push your rear-end toward the floor.
- Arch your low back slightly off of the floor.
- Reach towards your knees again and don't allow your back to flatten.

Strategy (B): working on the ground

- Start on your hands and knees with your hips above your knees.
- Move your hips backward toward your feet.
- As you rock back, stick your rear end up toward the ceiling.
- There should be no rounding of your back.



Strategy (C): squatting to pick something up

- Squat down with your feet shoulder width apart. You can use a ball as shown.
- As you bend your knees, gradually push your rear-end backwards.

Rolling Over or Twisting

When you roll from your back to your side, your back will want to twist. To prevent this from happening, practice the following strategy:

- Before you roll over to one side or the other, flatten your low back, tighten your stomach and buttock muscles.
- Bend one knee as shown. Bend the other knee if you are rolling over to your other side.
- As you roll to your side, make sure your hips and shoulders move together.



Additional Instructions: