

SHEET 7 Static stretches for back pain

Instructions for stretching

- Breathe in and then go into the stretch with the out breath.
- Increase the range of motion until you feel the stretch, then wait and hold at that point.
- Hold the stretch for 10–30 seconds breathing normally or hold for longer if that feels good. The longer you hold the stretch the more you are affecting the fasciae of the body which are thought to be important in some pain complaints.
- Tune in and listen to your body. Feel free to ‘fine tune’ the stretch once you are in position.
- You are looking for the sensation of a ‘good stretch’ not an uncomfortable increase in pain that you need to fight through. If you feel a ‘bad pain’ back off slightly until the stretch feels comfortable or slowly come out of it.
- Aim to take 10 minutes to do the exercises every day. If you are in pain it can feel good to do them after a warm bath.

Gluteal stretch

- Take your knee to your chest, hug and hold.



Figure S7.1

- Repeat on other leg. **See Figure S7.1**

Piriformis stretch

The sciatic nerve runs very close to this muscle and some cases of sciatica are caused by the nerve getting trapped at this point.

- Lie on your back. To stretch the left piriformis put your left heel on your right knee.

Self-care resources



Figure S7.2

- Put your hands through the hole created with your legs and wrap them around your thigh to bring both legs to the chest. You should feel a stretch in your left buttock area.
- 'Fine tune' the stretch so that it is targeting the area that feels good for you. **See Figure S7.2**



Figure S7.3

Hamstring stretch

- Lie on your back. Take your knee to your chest and wrap your hands around the thigh.
- Now try and straighten the leg to stretch the hamstrings. **See Figure S7.3**

Spinal twist

- Lie on the floor with your knees up and your feet flat on the floor. Your arms are outstretched.
- On the out breath gently take your knees towards one side while turning your head slowly the other way.
- Just let your knees go as far as is comfortable to feel a gentle stretch in the spine. **See Figure S7.4**



Figure S7.4