

## SHEET 8 Active isolated stretches (AIS) for low back pain

The most common form of stretching is static stretching, which is like yoga stretching where you go into the stretch and then wait and hold.

There is another form of stretching called AIS that some people find more effective or enjoyable. The following is a great 10–15 minute stretching protocol for back pain.

### Steps in AIS

- Take your body part into the stretch **ACTIVELY**.
- At the end of the range of motion use your hands or a belt to increase the stretch slightly for 1.5–2 seconds only.
- Release, go back to the starting point and repeat.
- Do 10 repetitions of 2–3 cycles with a pause in between cycles.

### AIS for the gluteal muscles

- Lie on your back with your feet on the floor. **See Figure S8.1A**
- Actively take one knee towards the chest.
- When you have gone as far as you can, assist the stretch with your hands around the knee. Hold for 1.5–2 seconds. **See Figure S8.1B**

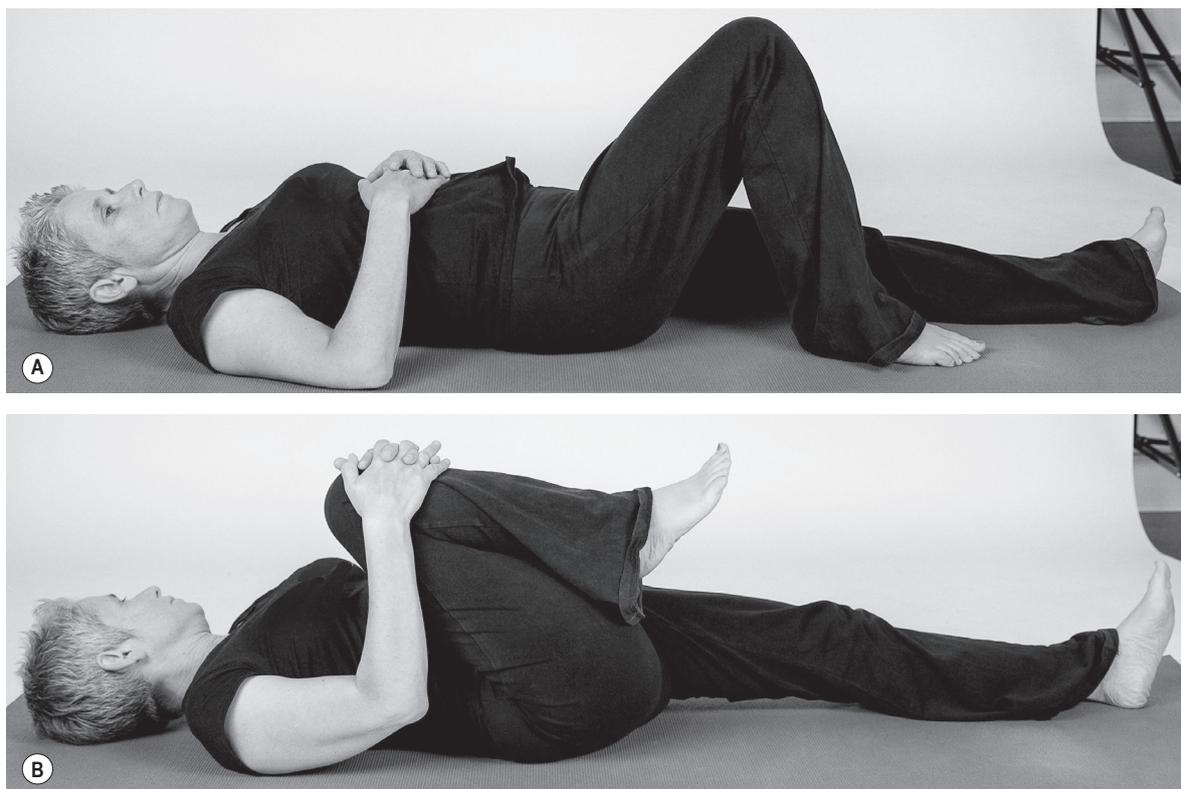


Figure S8.1A,B

# Self-care resources

- Release and repeat. Do 10 repetitions of 2–3 cycles.

## **AIS for the piriformis**

- Lie on your back. Left leg is straight and right leg is bent in a triangle shape with your foot on the floor.
- Keep the left leg in the same place and now bring the right leg towards you while, at the same time, externally rotating at the hip.
- When you have got as far as you can, put one hand on your foot and the other on your knee and pull the stretch further towards you. Hold for a count of 1.5–2 seconds.



Figure S8.2

- Release and repeat. Do 10 repetitions of 2–3 cycles. **See Figure S8.2**

## **AIS for the hamstrings**

### **Bent knee hamstring**

- Lie on your back with both legs bent.
- Bring one leg closer to your chest but still in the bent position. Now straighten the leg as far as you can.



Figure S8.3

- Assist at the end with a rope or belt around your foot and hold the increased stretch for 1.5–2 seconds.
- Release and repeat. Do 10 repetitions of 2–3 cycles. **See Figure S8.3**

### **Straight leg hamstring**

- Now lengthen one leg along the floor. Keep the other leg bent with your foot on the floor.
- Take the straight leg up as far as you are able. Assist the stretch at the end with a rope around your foot for 1.5–2 seconds.
- Release and repeat. Do 10 repetitions of 2–3 cycles.