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# Top 8 Upper Back Exercises

*Upper Back Exercises* - When you hear someone talk about the thoracic back they are referring to the upper back. The upper back is the part of the back where the ribs attach. Technically, upper back pain is pain between your neck and your lower back.

## Causes of Upper Back Pain

The cause of upper back pain can come from poor posture, overuse, a twisting motion or an injury. Some common ways you could injure your upper back would be by carrying objects, twisting, bending, and throwing. Sitting for long periods of time can cause upper back muscles to tighten and stiffen up. Intense coughing or sneezing can cause upper back pain. Scoliosis can sometimes cause upper back pain. It's usually when the curve in the spine has developed during the adolescent growth period. There is usually an imbalance of the muscles in the upper back when it comes to scoliosis.

If you sit at a desk, drive a lot, and even work out on a regular basis. All those things can cause back pain and stiffness. When you sit for extended periods of time it can lead to tightness in your hips, chest, hamstrings, and shoulders. This is well known to cause poor posture and upper back pain.

If you do any strength training, that can lead to upper back pain. When you exercise a muscle, it is being put under tension. This causes a breakdown of the muscle fibers. Those muscle fibers will then repair themselves, coming back even stronger and larger. This might sound great but if you don't do proper stretching, the stronger muscle fibers can become tight and then form knots. Which are adhesions in the muscle.

## Preventing and Relieving Upper Back Pain

To prevent upper back pain or if you need to relieve existing pain, it is fundamental to add the proper stretching to your daily routine.

I put some exercises for upper back pain and strengthening a little further down on this page. They can be done multiple times a day if you want. This is especially vital if you

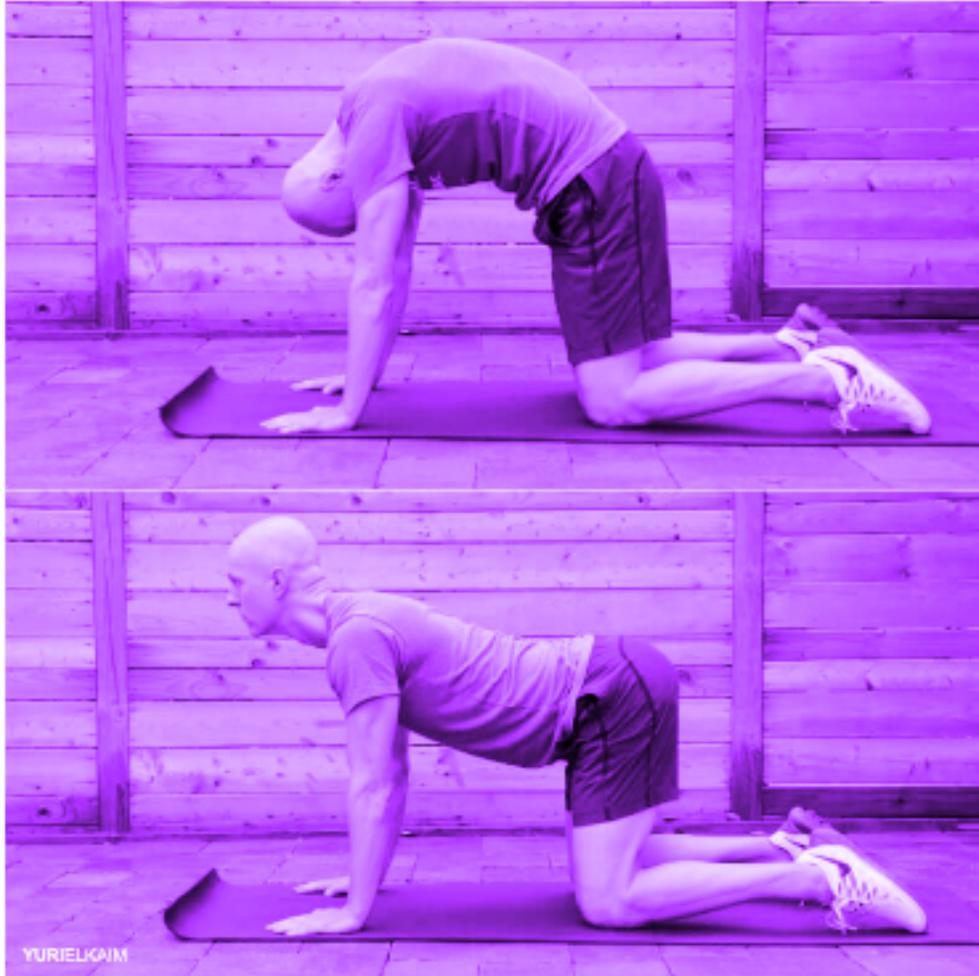
know that you will be sitting or standing for long periods of time. It's also a good idea to perform them whenever you need to ease the tension in your upper back.

Many of us are constantly at a computer or have a phone in hand. This means that your head and eyes will be tilted downwards more than you want to admit. Definitely more than you probably realize. This forward, downward head position can affect your entire body. Having a sore and stiff neck is quite common, along with lower and upper back pain, and headaches. Using all those devices can lead to forward rounded shoulders and the head resting too far out in front of the shoulders. These awkward positions may seem comfortable but they actually change the alignment and health of your spine.

The best way to deal with soreness, pain and a stiff upper back is through stretching using the right exercises. All exercises below include detailed instructions and video examples.

It's always a good idea to consult your doctor before beginning any exercise regimen.

## CAT-COW STRETCH



The Cat-Cow Stretch is actually two stretches in one, and is a great way to self-mobilize the upper part of your back. By performing these two poses, you are slowly mobilizing each on your vertebra. This allows the small bones to move the way they are supposed to for your day-to-day activities. It keeps them from becoming too rigid and stiff.

To Begin the Cat-Cow Stretch:

Get on your hands and knees with the knees under your hips and hands under your shoulders.

Inhale as you move your tail bone up towards the ceiling, arching the back towards the floor, and pressing the chest upwards.

Make sure you relax your shoulder blades. You are now in the cow pose.

Now, exhale as you transition from the “cow” to “cat” pose, rounding out your back towards the ceiling and pushing your shoulder blades away from you.

Your spine should be forming a “C” like curve in the opposite direction.

Focus on tightening your stomach muscles and holding it 15 to 30 seconds. You can increase it as you progress over time.

Repeat this cycle 5 to 10 times.

## **SIDE-LYING THORACIC ROTATION**



The ability to twist and rotate can sometimes become limited. The cause is usually from your day to day activities, rather than the lack of. This stretch is a good way to improve rotation in your spine and get back some mobility.

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To Begin the Side-Lying Thoracic Rotation:

Lay down on your left side with your knees bent and arms straight out in front of you, and palms touching.

Slowly lift your right hand straight up from the left hand, opening up the arm as if it's a book, following your top hand with your head and eyes until your right hand reaches the other side of your body, palm up.

Your head and eyes should be turned towards the right.

Hold this stretch for a few seconds before returning to the starting position with palms facing each other.

You can repeat this up to 10 times on each side.

## **CHILD'S POSE WITH ROTATION**



The child's pose stretches multiple muscles in your back, along with the hips and ankles.

To begin the Child's Pose:

Get on all fours in a comfortable position either on a bed or on the floor. Have your wrists, elbows and shoulders stacked.

Slowly push your butt back as close to your heels as you can without being uncomfortable.

At the same time, slide your hands ahead of you as far as they will go.

Tuck your head under.

Hold this stretched position for 30 seconds.

Return to the start position on all fours.

*Second Rep:*

Slowly push your butt back as close to your heels as you can without being uncomfortable.

At the same time, slide your hands ahead of you as far as they will go.

This time, rotate your arms to the *right* walking your hands over using your fingers.

Hold this stretched position for 30 seconds.

Repeat on the left side this time. You can repeat this cycle as many times as you want.

## KNEELING THORACIC EXTENSION



This stretch focuses on relieving muscle tension and thoracic back pain.

To Begin the Kneeling Thoracic Extension:

Begin with your knees on the ground, hip width apart. Lean your elbows on a chair placed in front of you, shoulder width apart. Reach with your elbows a few inches in front of your shoulders.

Your head should be between your arms at the bench/chair level.

While keeping your hands and elbows in place, lean your butt back toward your heels as far as possible.

You want to forcefully push your chest down toward the floor to accomplish the thoracic extension.

Hold this position for five seconds. Increase this as you become more conditioned.

Come back up to the starting position and repeat for five sets.

## **QUADRUPED ARM AND LEG RAISE**



This exercise can help you strengthen your arm and leg muscles while banishing back pain.

To Begin the Quadrupedal Arm and Leg Raise:

From a four-point stance on the floor, draw your belly button inward to your spine and clench your butt muscles.

Simultaneously extend one arm and the opposite leg away from your body.

Hold for 5 seconds. Hold longer as you progress and get stronger.

Ensure you adopt a thumbs up position for the arm and keep the extended leg straight at the knee.

Don't lift either knee higher than parallel to the body.

Lower under control and repeat with the opposite limbs.

**LOCUST POSE**



You might want a yoga mat or some padding on the floor. In addition, you may want a folded up blanket or towel to place underneath your pelvis and ribs.

To Begin the Locust Pose:

Lie down on your stomach, with your arms on the floor near the sides of your body and your hands by your hips.

Rest your forehead on the floor with your neck relaxed, or lie your head turned to one side.

Lift your head, arms, chest, and legs off the floor. Keep your legs straight and together, and your arms parallel to the floor.

*Note:* If you are having trouble raising both legs together, raise one and hold it for 10 seconds, then lower it and repeat it with the other leg.

Look straight forward but if you find it to be difficult, simply look down toward the floor.

*Note:* If you have trouble raising your arms up, drop your palms to the floor and press down gently to help lift and expand your chest.

Hold this pose for 10 seconds. Increase this as you get stronger.

*Note:* If this pose hurts your hips, place a towel between your hip bones and the floor for added cushioning.

Release the pose by lowering your legs, torso, and arms to the floor.

Repeat this 1 to 2 more times. As you get stronger hold the pose for longer periods of time. You can even increase your repetitions.

## SPHINX POSE



The Sphinx Pose is a mini gentle backbend in yoga. This pose is a modification to the Cobra Pose.

To Begin the Sphinx Pose:

Lie down face first on the floor with your feet hip distance apart.

Elbows under your shoulders and forearms on the floor facing forward.

Press into your forearms and lift your head, neck, chest, and torso off the floor.

Firm your legs by rotating them by rolling your outer thighs towards the floor.

Hold in position for 15 seconds

The Sphinx Pose has the weight on the forearms taking it off the wrists.

This pose also counteracts and restores the 3 C's: Car, Computer, and Couch. Which causes flattening of the lower back and rounding of the upper back caused by long periods of improper sitting.

## SEATED FORWARD BEND



To begin the Seated Forward Bend:

Sit on the floor or on a mat with your legs out straight in front of you.

A lot of people when they're starting out have really tight hamstrings along with their back. They find that they can't get very far. So, if you have a yoga strap or something similar, you might want to use it.

The first video demonstrates this exercise using the strap. The second video is without a strap for someone who is more advanced.

Take the strap and wrap it around the soles of your feet.

Sit up nice and tall with your back straight, holding on to those straps.

Then come forward as far as its comfortable for you. If you are more flexible you can go farther.

You are going to pivot from your hips so you want the pelvis to come over the heads of your femurs, and your head will be an extension of your spine.

You don't want to drop your head or round your back because that's just asking for trouble.

Keep the length and extension all the way forward to whatever is comfortable for you. If you start feeling pain then you need to back off immediately.

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If you do these exercises on a regular basis you will build up your core muscles. Having a strong core can help prevent injury, increase your stability, improve flexibility, and help with pain.

If any of these back exercises make your back pain worse, it is crucial to stop doing them immediately and consult your doctor.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to [send me](#) a message!



[Contact Back Pain Remedies](#)

