

## Sore Back 101: How to rescue your back & feel human again.

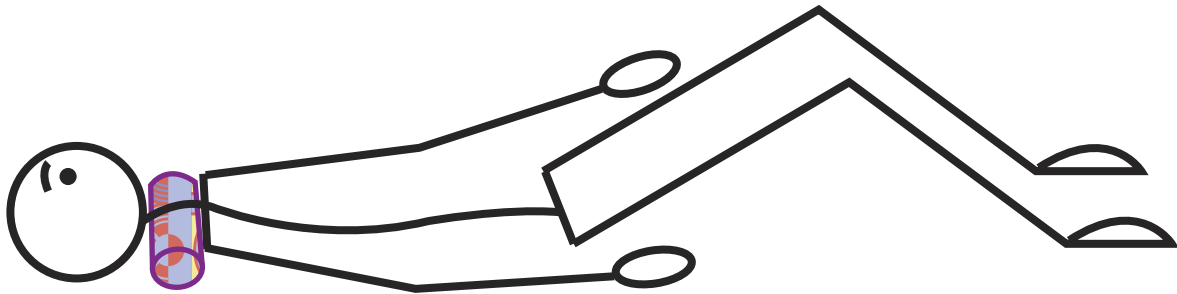
Naturally, the best time to start getting your back in shape is NOT when it's killing you. But, we humans being the procrastinators we are, most of us don't worry about it when we're feeling okay. Inevitably, however, you'll have one of those days. It's cold and damp. Or you were stuck in the car for two hours. Or you picked up your grandson, who is turning out to be quite the bruiser. Or you zipped when you should have zagged. Whatever it is, suddenly you have a really sore back. You can barely move. You can't stand up straight. You can't sit down. You just hurt!

First off, slap on an ice pack for 10-15 minutes. Yes, ice. Ice is first aid. When you have injured yourself, you have inflammation. As in flame. As in heat. As in pain. So you need to cool it off first. Then take anti-inflammatories if you're allowed to, or analgesics if you're not. Later on, you can use a hot pack to help relax your muscles. And then you can try these gentle rescue exercises. Do them in the order shown. It makes a difference. Just take it slow, and STOP IF THEY CAUSE MORE PAIN!

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### Sore Back 101: (1) Starting Position ~ R-e-l-a-x

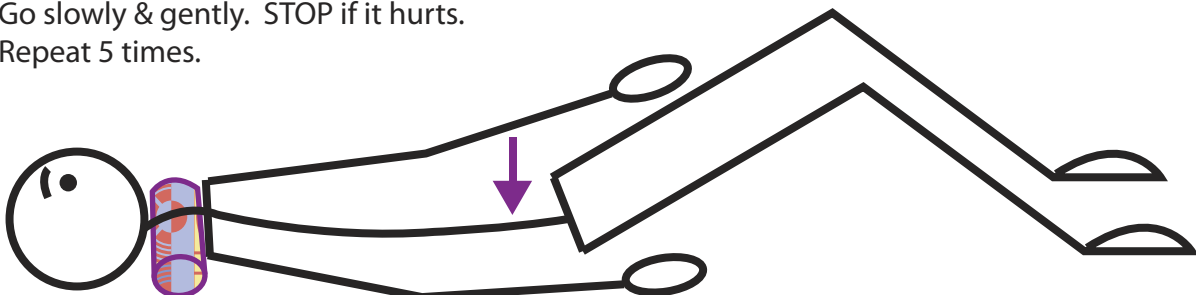
- Try lying down on your bed with your knees bent & your feet flat.
- Place a towel roll or small pillow under your neck or head as needed.
- This position helps your lower back flatten out & relax.
- You can place a hot pack under your back for 15-20 minutes to help loosen up.



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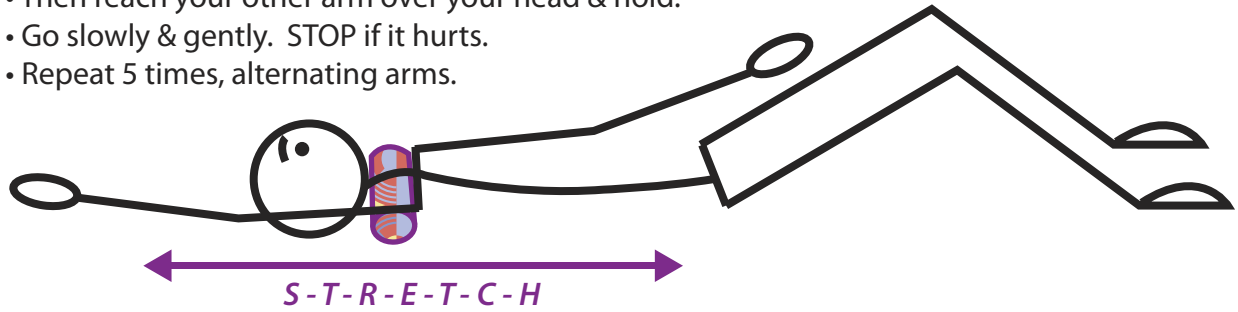
### Sore Back 101: (2) Flatten Belly & Back

- Remove the hot pack.
- Gently suck in your belly & allow your lower back to stretch out a little.
- The object is not to flatten your lower back all the way, but to remind your belly muscles to help support it. Don't push too hard; just feel a gentle stretch.
- Hold for 5 seconds, then relax slowly.
- Go slowly & gently. STOP if it hurts.
- Repeat 5 times.



## Sore Back 101: (3) Single Arm Reach/Back Stretch

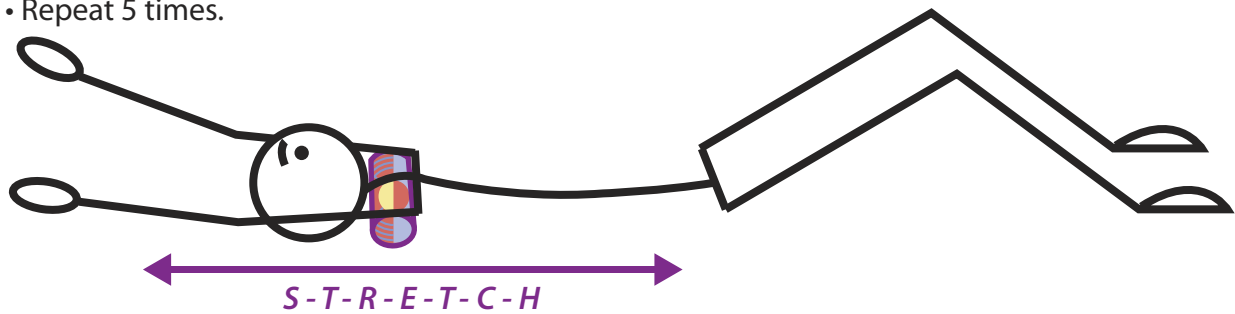
- Begin in Starting Position.
- Reach one arm over your head, stretching your arm & torso.
- Hold for 10 seconds, then relax slowly, bringing your arm back by your side.
- Then reach your other arm over your head & hold.
- Go slowly & gently. STOP if it hurts.
- Repeat 5 times, alternating arms.



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## Sore Back 101: (4) Double Arm Reach/Back Stretch

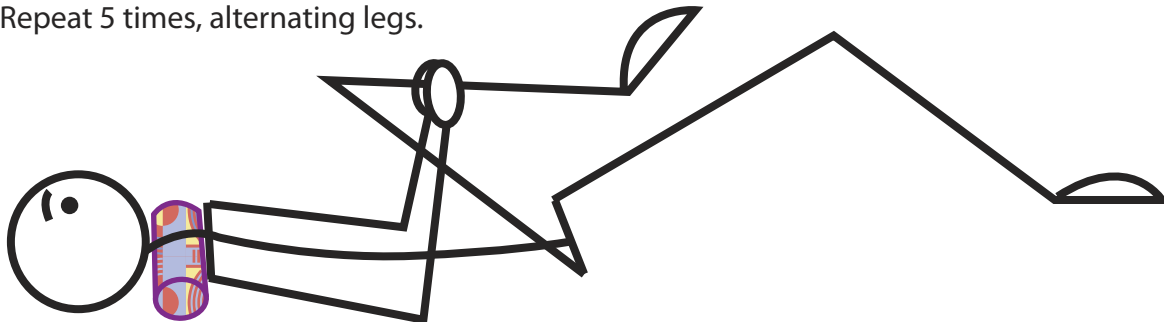
- If the previous exercise was comfortable, try this one.
- Reach both arms over your head & stretch your arms & torso.
- Hold for 30 seconds, then relax slowly, bringing your arms back by your side.
- Go slowly & gently. STOP if it hurts.
- Repeat 5 times.



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## Sore Back 101: (5) One Knee to Chest

- Get into your Starting Position, both knees bent, feet flat.
- Gently bring one knee up to your chest.
- Wrap your hands around your knee & gently hug it as closely to your chest as possible.
- Hold for 10 seconds.
- DO NOT bounce your leg up & down. Hold it steadily & firmly.
- You should feel a gentle stretch on the back of your thigh &/or lower back. STOP if it hurts.
- Lower your leg back to the Starting Position. Hug your other knee to your chest & hold.
- Repeat 5 times, alternating legs.



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**Congratulations! You're on your way to a happier back.**

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