

## OVERVIEW

**Back strain is a generalized term for injury to the soft tissue that supports the spine. This can include muscle, tendon, or ligament damage. It is likely that joints or disc(s) of the spine may also be affected.**

**Abdominal muscles, buttock muscles, and obliques all help to control the motion of the spine. Tendons attach the muscles of the back to the vertebrae.**

**Damage to any of these tissues can create back pain and instability in the spine.**

## THE LUMBAR SPINE



## CAUSES OF BACK STRAIN

A movement that causes forceful extension of the back, common to sports or lifting injuries, will cause this condition. In most cases, the muscle is not damaged in an injury without also doing damage to the spine.

It is also possible that the muscles of the back are compensating for an underlying spinal condition (such as a slipped disc), causing fatigue of the supportive muscles. The muscle strain is then a symptom of the distress of a vertebral joint or disc.

## SYMPTOMS OF BACK STRAIN

- Pain the back that radiates outward
- Shortness of breath
- Stiffness
- Movement limitations

## TREATMENT OF BACK STRAIN

- Rest
- Identification of any underlying conditions.
- Anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen

### EXERCISE 1: Hooklying with Chair—Diaphragmatic Breathing at 90°



#### Instructions

Begin lying on your back with your legs bent at a 90 degree angle, resting on a chair. You should have one hand on your chest and your other hand on your upper belly.

Slowly take a deep breath in, filling your belly with air, then exhale and repeat. Make sure not to arch your lower back and perform slow and controlled breathing.

There should be no movement of your chest as you breathe.

### EXERCISE 2: Lumbar Supine Traction



#### Instructions:

Begin lying on your back with your knees bent and feet resting flat on the floor.

Place your hands on the tops of your thighs, close to your hips.

Slowly press down on your thighs, extending your elbows, until you feel a gentle relief in your low back.

Make sure to slowly increase pressure and stop if you feel an increase in pain.

#### Important:

The therapeutic exercises described on this page are for reference purposes only and may or may not apply directly to your condition. Only perform the exercises assigned by your physician. By using this information, you understand the potential risks connected with activity in any exercise, physical fitness or training program.