

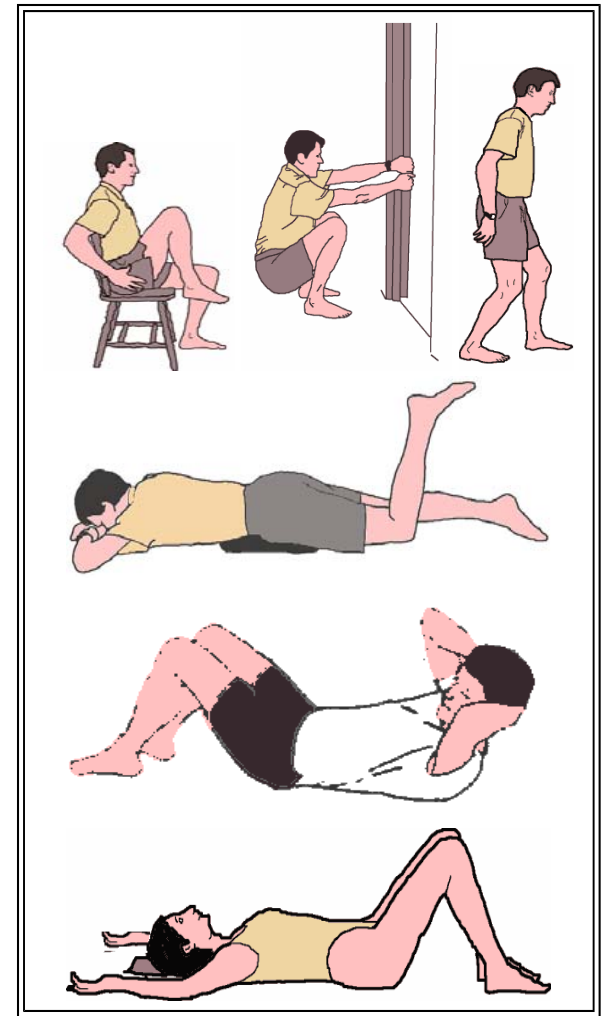
The Back Maintenance Manual (1): Pilates Exercises for Low Back Pain

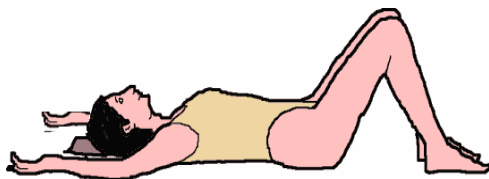
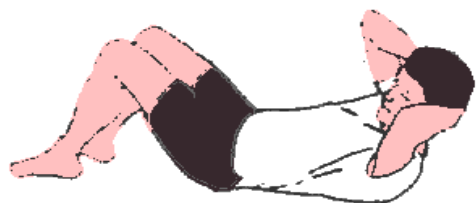
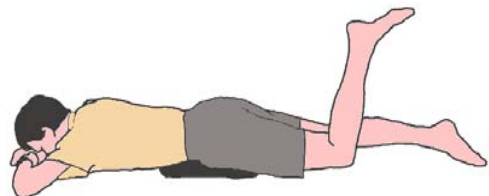
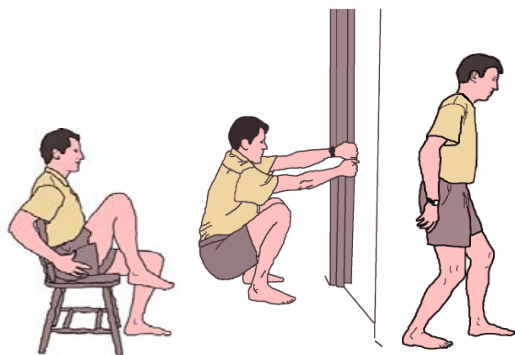
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The Back Maintenance Manual (1):

Pilates Exercises for Low Back Pain

by Bruce Thomson

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You do not have a bad back... You have a bad movement pattern.



Despite the billions of dollars spent on research and treatment, the western epidemic of back pain shows no sign of abating. The bad back industry is huge, sophisticated, hi-tech - & (in terms of long term maintenance) minimally effective.

The author is not a back care specialist. That makes this book special. That makes it unique. That makes it something you should investigate. I have suffered back pain sufficient to make me wonder if I could continue in my occupation as a farm and pet animal veterinarian. I know what it is like to go to the doctor. You get pills and sympathy - a short term fix. I know what it is like to go to the chiropractor. You get manipulation and sympathy - a short term fix. Don't get me wrong! When I'm in pain, I value their help immensely, and you should too. But it's still a short term fix. What about the next time your back comes under challenge? Have you achieved the strength, and **wisdom in the way you move** that will bring about the long term solution that will give you confidence to go out and achieve?

I now rarely suffer back pain. I can remain in the work force & continue to provide for my family. I do a minimal amount of maintenance exercises to combat the musculo-skeletally destructive westerner's environment. That's all. This book was written to share with you the results of intensive independent research that had no vested interest in maintaining a population of bad backs to treat - I just wanted to get well! I'd like for you to get well too. It's my sincere desire that you too will learn to repair and maintain your bad back. Maybe together, we can put the "bad back" industry out of business?

Disclaimer: This book does not replace the advice of a medical specialist - Please read Back Pain Red Flags (page 55) before proceeding!

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There are two orthodox western approaches to back injury prevention:-

1. **Isolate and exercise individual muscles or groups of muscles with unnatural movement patterns**, using exercise machines that are not a part of the real world, and never will be. An example of this approach may be viewed at: <http://www.exrx.net/Workouts/Workout1LTA.html>. Despite this unreal approach to fitness workouts, there is good evidence that they provide some help in reducing back pain, but in my opinion there is an easier and more effective approach.
2. **Provide instruction in "correct technique" for lifting** - Which appears to make sense, but it doesn't work:- "Despite the popularity of training in safe lifting and evidence that lifting is cited as a cause of back injury in a majority of cases, there have been no controlled studies showing a consequent drop in manual handling accident rates or back injury rates" (Reference 49, page 39). This is not the least bit surprising! We use our backs for a myriad of movements other than lifting each day, and all of these none-lifting movements are potentially damaging to our backs.

The Back Maintenance Manual improves on the above approaches by:-

1. Replacing **Isolation** of the muscles and muscle groups with **Integration** of the muscles into natural and healthy "whole of body movement patterns".
2. Replacing **"training for lifting"** with **"Pilates Controlology"** - the mind consciously taking note of the body movement patterns, and the mind controlling and directing the body movement patterns.

But the Back Maintenance Manual goes further than this:-

It introduces exercises that not only increase muscle strength, flexibility and endurance: they also rehearse and correct those everyday movement patterns that cause your back so much grief!

(Disclaimer: This book does not replace the advice of a medical specialist - Proceed at your own risk!)

Section	Contents	Page
1	Introduction, philosophy behind the Back Maintenance Manual.	1 - 4
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Refer to the left hand panel for the sections and page numbers:-

(This book does not replace the advice of a medical specialist - Refer "Back Pain Red Flags", page 55). Before starting any exercises, read the section "Study your Pain, Study your Posture". By the end of this section you should have decided whether your pain is caused by moving into lumbar extension or moving into lumbar flexion, and whether you have pain due to a tight weak Psoas muscle. Armed with this knowledge, you will know which of the "first aid" exercises (section 4) are right for you.

Now to the actual exercises:-

First three months:- Set aside a half hour every day to work through "Introduction to Pilates Contrology" and Beginners Exercises (sections 3 and 5). Take time to learn as you go. A few weeks will make a difference, although real proficiency in "Contrology" takes months to years.

Second three months:- add the Intermediate Exercises (section 6) to your exercise routine.

After six months:- Refer to section 7!

Apply the sound movement patterns that you are learning to your daily routines. With time, you will be doing more and more of your "back exercises" just by moving wisely and thoughtfully through the day, and one hour of maintenance per week (in addition to walking or jogging) will be all that you need!

If you have a tight weak psoas: Mark the following exercises and emphasize them in your exercise routine: 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 33, 34, 36, 52.

If you have pain upon lumbar extension: Mark the following exercises and emphasize them in your exercise routine: 17, 22, 23, 25, 27, 29, 30, 32, 37, 38.

If you have pain upon lumbar flexion: Mark the following exercises and emphasize them in your exercise routine: 17, 23, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 39, 40, 47, 53.

If you are seated while working: get up and move regularly - Movement is a very important part of back maintenance! During main breaks, do some of the following exercises: 21, 23, 26, 33, 34, 36, 50, 52, 53.

Don't forget to read section 7!

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