

## OrthoBethesda Therapy Services

### Extension-Based Home Exercise Program for Low Back Pain

**General Instructions:** Perform 10 repetitions of each exercise. Initially perform these exercises 6 to 8 times daily. The goal is to eventually perform the exercises hourly until you are pain-free.

#### 1. Lying Face Down – Press Up

- Lie face down with your hands placed on the ground directly underneath your shoulders.
  - Your ankles should be straightened, as comfortable, so that the tops of your feet rest against the ground.
- Push your hands into the ground, lifting your chest and stomach in the air and looking straight ahead.
  - Relax the muscles in your low back, hips and legs, allowing your lower back to sag down.
  - Breathe normally.
- Fully exhale at the top, holding this position for at least 1 to 2 seconds and then lower yourself back down.
- Attempt to raise yourself up a little higher with each repetition.



#### 2. Standing Up

- Stand tall with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Place your hands in the small of your back with the fingertips pointing down and in.
- Bend your torso backward at the waist as far as possible, using your hands as a pivot point.
  - Keep your knees straight.
- Hold this position for at least 1 to 2 seconds, then return to an upright position.
- Attempt to bend back a little further with each repetition.



*If the above exercises create too much pain, you should initially perform one or both of the exercises below, with the goal of eventually performing Exercises 1 and 2:*

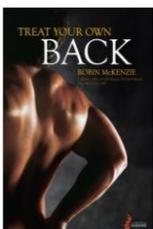
#### 3. Lying Face Down

- Lie face down with your arms resting by your sides with the palms facing down.
- Turn your head to either side and relax your neck as much as possible
- Stay in this position for 2 to 3 minutes, breathing normally and making an effort to relax all of the muscles in your lower back, hips and legs.
- Once you are pain-free, progress to Exercise 4.



#### 4. Lying Face Down – On Forearms

- Lie face down with your elbows placed directly under your shoulders and your forearms flat on the ground.
- Stay in this position for 2 to 3 minutes, breathing normally and making an effort to relax all of the muscles in your lower back, hips and legs.



It is recommended that you purchase a copy of "Treat Your Own Back" by Robin McKenzie. This book includes the above-mentioned exercises as well as other exercises, and is very helpful for understanding the cause and treatment of back pain. "Treat Your Own Back" can be purchased online from numerous distributors including OPTP.com and Amazon.com for \$10-12 plus shipping.