

CHEST STRETCH

Chest stretches work to open and loosen our pectoral region, reducing tightness and as a result, promoting better body movements, better posture and even relieving upper back pain.

- Stand up straight with your feet a hip-width apart. Your shoulders should be squared but relaxed.
- Interlock your fingers near your lower back. Your back should still be straight.
- Push your arms up while pulling your shoulder blades together.
- Hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Continue holding the position with your arms extended as far as they can go. Keep looking forward and don't bend your neck.

SEATED ROWS IN A GYM

The seated row targets the muscles in your upper back and the latissimus dorsi – a muscle on the outer side of the chest wall. This exercise will help improve your posture and help protect your shoulders.

- Sit on the bench with your knees bent and grasp the cable attachment.
- Position yourself with your knees slightly bent, so you must reach to grab the handle with outstretched arms without curling the lower back over.
- Pull the handle and weight back toward the lower abdomen while trying not to use the momentum of the row too much by moving the torso backward with the arms.
- Target the middle to upper back by keeping your back straight and squeezing your shoulder blades together as you row, keeping your chest out.
- Return the handle forward under tension to full stretch, remembering to keep that back straight even though flexed at the hips. Repeat the exercise for the desired number of repetitions.

SIDE - LYING LEG RAISES

It's a great and simple way to build strength in the outer thighs and the hip abductors, which includes the gluteus Medius and Minimus. You can do it lying down or standing using just your body weight.

- Lie down on your right side on a mat or the floor.
- Place your arm straight on the floor under your head or bend your elbow and cradle your head for support.
- As you exhale, gently raise your left leg off the lower leg.
- Inhale and lower the leg back down to meet the right leg.
- Repeat the desired number of reps then repeat for the other side.

SUMMARY

Flat back syndrome is caused by a loss of the curvature in your lower spine. It can be present at birth, or it can happen because of surgery or a medical condition.

People with flat back syndrome carry their head and neck too far forward. This can cause pain and difficulty balancing.

Flat back syndrome can be diagnosed with a medical history, physical exam, and X-ray imaging. Treatment typically includes physical therapy and exercise, though sometimes surgery is necessary.



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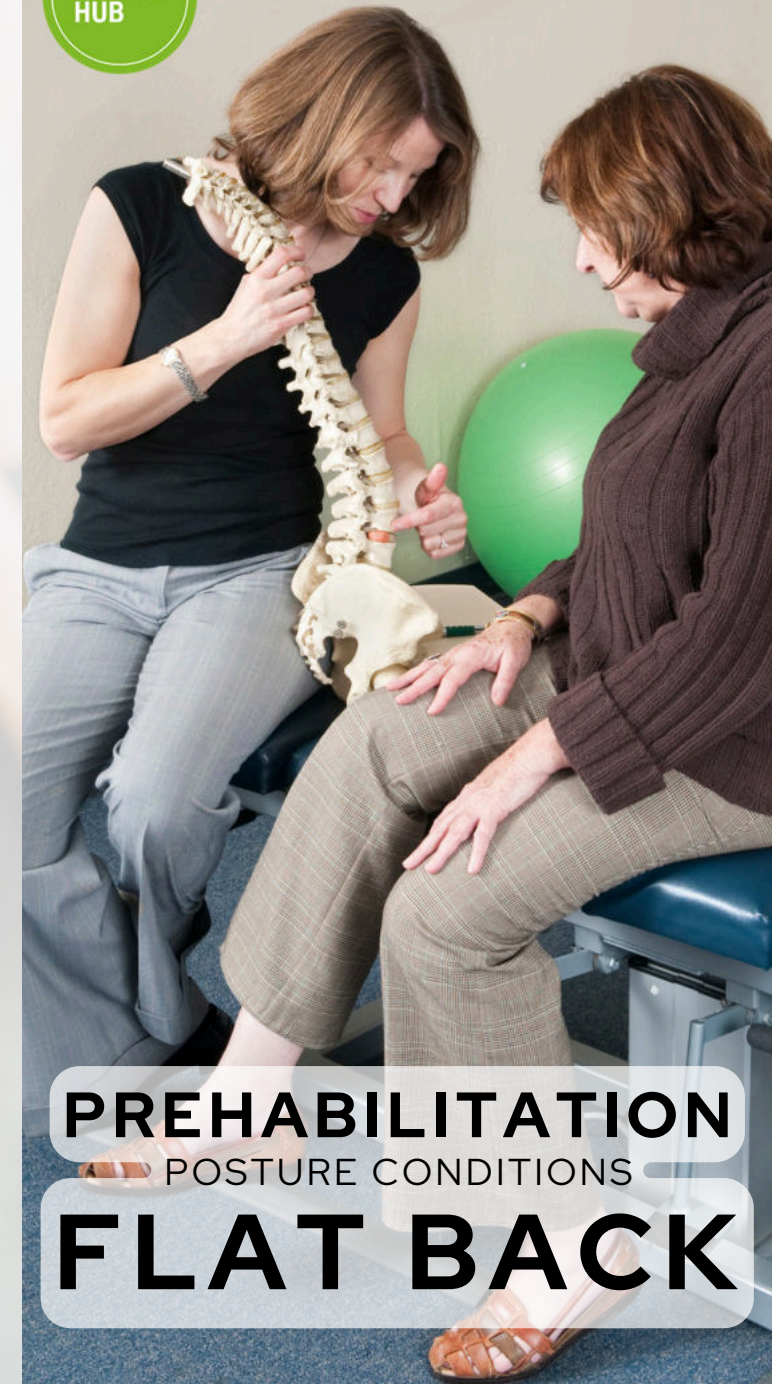
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Danny Kavanagh

HEALTH HUB



PREHABILITATION
POSTURE CONDITIONS
FLAT BACK

WHAT IS FLAT BACK SYNDROME

Flat back syndrome is also called fixed sagittal imbalance. In this condition, the normal curve in your lower spine is reduced or absent. A major symptom is difficulty standing for long periods of time. Flat back syndrome can be present at birth. It can also happen for other reasons, including:

- Degeneration or trauma.
- Spinal surgery.

Treatment often involves physical therapy, bracing, or surgery. This article looks at flat back syndrome, its causes, and diagnosis. It also discusses treatment options.

CAUSES OF FLAT BACK SYNDROME

Some causes of flat back syndrome include:

- Congenital, meaning it is present at birth.
- Ankylosing spondylitis, a type of inflammatory arthritis of the spine.
- Compression fractures of the vertebrae, like those caused by osteoporosis.
- Degenerative disc disease.

Flat back syndrome can also happen after spine surgery. In the past, this was common after surgery to correct scoliosis, an abnormal curvature of the spine. The devices implanted during these surgeries could cause flat back syndrome, especially with age. Updated surgical techniques have reduced this complication.



SYMPTOMS OF FLAT BACK SYNDROME

Your spine normally has two curves. Your lumbar spine in your lower back and your cervical spine in your neck curve inward.

Your thoracic spine in your upper back curves outward. These curves are part of your spine's natural alignment. They help you balance and maintain your centre of gravity.

When these curves are diminished, you can have trouble standing up straight. You may stoop forward, especially at the end of the day. You may even feel like you're falling forward. To stand up straight, you might have to flex your hips and knees and adjust your pelvis.

In a person with flat back syndrome, the lumbar spine doesn't have its natural curvature. This causes the head and neck to pitch forward, which can make it hard to

walk and do day-to-day activities. You may feel tired from the strain of trying to stay balanced.

TREATING FLAT BACK SYNDROME

Treatment for flat back syndrome usually begins with exercise and physical therapy. This typically includes stretching and strengthening exercises to improve posture. The goal is to reverse the pattern of muscle imbalance that keeps the lower back flat.

This leaflet will give you a few exercises to help with the condition.

BACK EXTENSIONS

Back extension exercises specifically focus on the low back and the erector spinae muscle groups – which help you support, protect, and extend your spinal column and entire back. Posterior chain muscle group.

- Start by lying on the floor with your face down and your hands by your head, elbows wide.
- Keep your feet on the floor and engage your glutes and core to support your lower back.
- Then activate your back muscles all the way along the length of your spine to lift your shoulders, head, and chest up away from the floor and hold this top position for the required duration.
- Aim to squeeze your shoulder blades together on your back by contracting your upper back muscles.
- Also avoid lifting your chin up to look forward, instead keep your chin slightly tucked and look down on the floor just in front of you.

CORE WORK

The plank strengthens your spine, your rhomboids and trapezius, and your abdominal muscles, which naturally result in a strong posture as they grow in strength.

Hand Plank (easier)

- Plant hands directly under shoulders, like you're about to do a push-up.
- Your head should be straight and in line with your back.
- Hold the position for as long as possible without compromising your form or breath.

Forearm Plank (Moderate)

- Place forearms on the floor with elbows aligned below shoulders and arms parallel to your body at about shoulder width.
- Your head should be straight and in line with your back.
- Hold the position for as long as possible without compromising your form or breath.

Side Plank – This variation engages your obliques.

- Lie on your side with one leg stacked on top of the another, then prop your body up on your hand or elbow while keeping feet stacked.
- Neutralise your whole body in a straight line, ensuring the hips don't tilt forwards or backwards.
- You can make the side plank easier by crossing the upper leg in front of your body for additional support.

HAMSTRING & ADBOMINAL STRETCHES

Stretching the hamstrings and abdominals will help keep these muscles loose and flexible, which will improve posture, increase flexibility, and prevent lower back pain.

Hamstring Stretch

- Lie flat on either the ground or a mat with the legs fully stretched out. Hold the back of the right knee with both hands, pull the leg up toward the chest, and slowly straighten the knee until it feels as though it is stretching. Hold for the desired period and repeat the other side.

Abdominal Stretch

- Lay face down on the floor or an exercise mat.
- With your hips flat on the ground, push your upper body upward, while looking straight ahead. This will stretch the abdominal muscles.
- Only go up as high as your body allows. Hold for a period and slowly release.