

MAY
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TRAINING ON BOARD NEWSLETTER

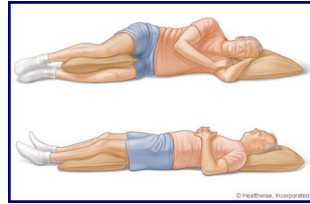


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Welcome to your next issue of Training on Board, packed with workout ideas and health tips for seafarers! This month, our theme is back pain. Back injuries are a major cause of repatriation in seafarers—read on to find out how you can prevent and relieve back pain using some simple exercises and fitness tips.



P.1 Exercises for back pain



P.2 Tips for every day



P.2 Safe lifting

EXERCISES FOR BACK PAIN

Keeping your back strong and supple is the best way to avoid back pain. These exercises can help to stretch and mobilise the spine to reduce lower back pain, including tension, stiffness and soreness.

BOTTOM TO HEELS STRETCH



Kneel on all fours with knees under hips and hands under shoulders. Keep your neck long and your shoulders back. Don't over-arch your back or lock your elbows. Slowly take your bottom backwards, maintaining the natural curve in the spine. Hold the stretch for one deep breath and return to the starting position.

Repeat 8-10 times.

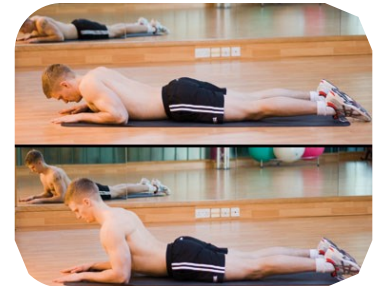
KNEE ROLLS



*Lie on your back. Place a small, flat cushion or book under your head. Keep your knees bent and together. Keep your upper body relaxed and your chin gently tucked in. Roll your knees to one side, followed by your pelvis, keeping both shoulders on the floor. Hold the stretch for one deep breath and return to the starting position. **Repeat 8-10 times, alternating sides.***

Repeat 8-10 times, alternating sides.

BACK EXTENSIONS



*Lie on your stomach and prop yourself up on your elbows, lengthening your spine. Keep your shoulders back and neck long. Arch your back up by pushing down on your hands. You should feel a gentle stretch in the stomach muscles as you arch backwards. Breathe and hold for 5-10 seconds. Return to the starting position. **Repeat 8-10 times.***



Back pain can also be worsened by ageing, obesity and poor physical condition, so it's important to maintain a healthy weight and eat a nutritious diet too.

NOTE TO SEAFARERS: Take care when exercising and work within your limits. If you're unsure, please seek medical advice before attempting any of the exercises in this newsletter.

TIPS FOR EVERY DAY

There may be parts of your job which cause or worsen back pain, but there are other factors which you can address in your day-to-day life to keep yourself fit and healthy:

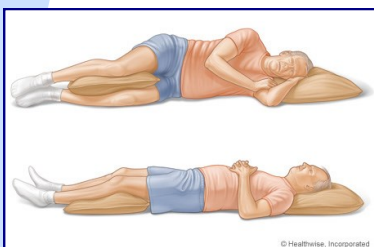
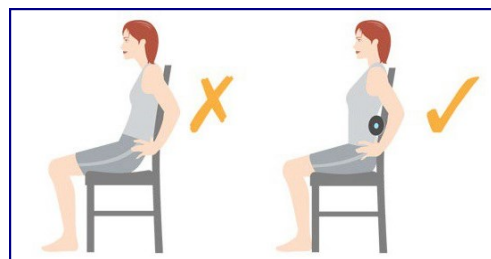


REST VS. ACTIVITY: Lying still is one of the worst things you can do for back pain—exercise will help to strengthen your back. It's important to get up and slowly start moving again.

TIP: Along with the exercises on page 1, you could also try walking or [yoga stretches](#).

POSTURE: Slouching is bad for you and poor posture can make back pain worse, especially if you sit for long periods.

TIP: Sit upright with your shoulders relaxed and your body supported against the back of your chair. Try putting a pillow or rolled towel between your lower back and the seat. Keep your feet flat on the floor.



SLEEP POSITION: You spend about a third of your life sleeping, so a poor sleep position can make back pain feel worse, and back pain can in turn make sleeping hard!

TIP: Try lying on your side with a pillow between your knees to keep your spine in a neutral position and relieve strain on your back. If you need to sleep on your back, slide a pillow under your knees. Comfortably firm mattresses are best.

One of the biggest causes of back injury at work is lifting or handling objects incorrectly. Lifting and handling heavy loads correctly can help to prevent injury and avoid back pain. These tips also apply if you're lifting weights in the gym...

SAFE LIFTING



Know your limits

Adopt a stable position

Don't bend your back when lifting

Keep your head up

Think before you lift

Don't flex the back any further while lifting

Don't twist when you lift

Keep the load close to the waist

Ensure a good hold on the load

Move smoothly

Put it down, then adjust if needed

Want to be featured in this newsletter and on our website?

Any ideas, photos or stories you'd like to share?

✉ E-mail us at training@iswan.org.uk and you could inspire someone else to get fit and healthy!

Sources:

www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Backpain/Pages/low-back-pain-exercises.aspx

www.webmd.com/pain-management/recurring-pain-11/slideshow-relieving-back-pain

[Britannia Health Watch, Volume 5, Issue 2, July 2016](#)

