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Self-Directed Home Exercise Program Referred Pain – Core Strengthening

Introduction: Some pain experienced in the leg may have a source outside the leg. You have been identified as having a likely source of pain emanating from a higher location in the body, specifically a nerve that takes course from the core and lumbar spine. These strengthening exercises can improve resistance to loads on your trunk and core and can improve tolerance of nerve problems. As you strengthen your core over several weeks, the pain in your leg is expected to dissipate.

Instructions: You can perform these exercises daily in 20-30 minute sessions. This exercise program should only be performed in patients with mild to moderate pain and may be used in conjunction with some oral medications. If you have more severe symptoms, rest prior to attempting proceeding through the program.



Side Plank: Lie on your side with your legs, hips, and shoulders in a straight line. Prop yourself up onto your forearm so your elbow is directly under your shoulder. Lift your hips off the floor and balance on your forearm and the outside of your foot. Hold this position for 15 seconds, then slowly lower your hip to the ground. Switch sides and repeat. Work up to holding for 1 minute or longer. This exercise can be made easier by starting with your knees and hips slightly bent instead of straight as shown.

Prone Extension Release: Lie face down on the floor on your stomach for 5 minutes to relax your back muscles. After lying on your stomach for 5 minutes, prop yourself up on your elbows for another 5 minutes. Lie flat again for 1 minute, then press down on your hands and elbows keeping your hips flat on the floor while propping yourself up. Hold for 1 second and lower yourself to the floor. Repeat 10 times.



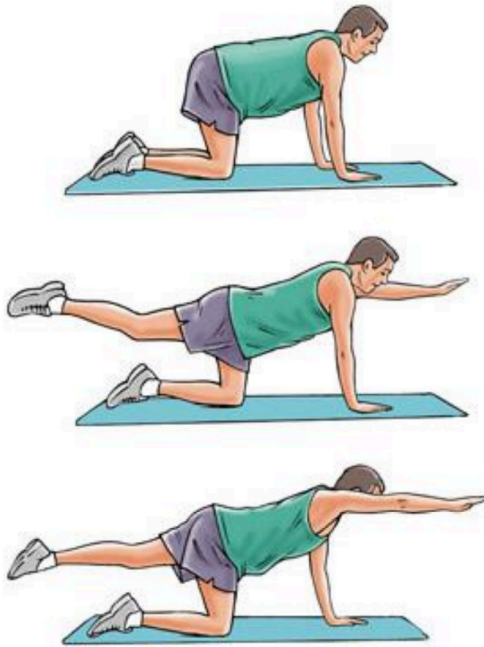


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Bird Dogs: Get down on your hands and knees.

Tighten your abdominal muscles to stiffen your spine. While keeping your abdominals tight, Raise one arm and the opposite leg away from you. Hold this position for 5 seconds and do not arch your back. Lower your arm and leg slowly and alternate sides. Repeat 10 times on each side. If this exercise is painful, try just raising the arms for 10 repetitions, then the legs for 10 repetitions separately, focusing on contracting your core. An advanced modification is to perform the arm raises from the pushup position for 10 repetitions per side.

Front Plank Hip Extensions: Lie on your stomach on a mat or floor with your elbows at your side, directly under your shoulders. Contract your abdominal muscles, then contract your thigh muscles to strongly straighten your knees, bringing your ankles toward your shins as pictured above. Once this has become easy, and without arching your back, slowly lift one leg off the ground and hold for 5 seconds. Keep the shoulders from shrugging and keep the shoulders away from your ears as shown below. Slowly lower. Repeat 10 times on each side.



Glut Bridges: Lie on your back on an exercise mat or the floor in a bent-knee position with your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart. Gently contract your abdominal muscles to flatten your low back into the floor. While giving an exhale, keep the abdominals engaged and lift your hips up off the floor. Do not go so high as to arch your back. Keep your abdominals engaged and hold 5 seconds. Slowly return to starting position, repeat 10 times. As an added challenge, try holding a ball or pillow between your knees as shown.



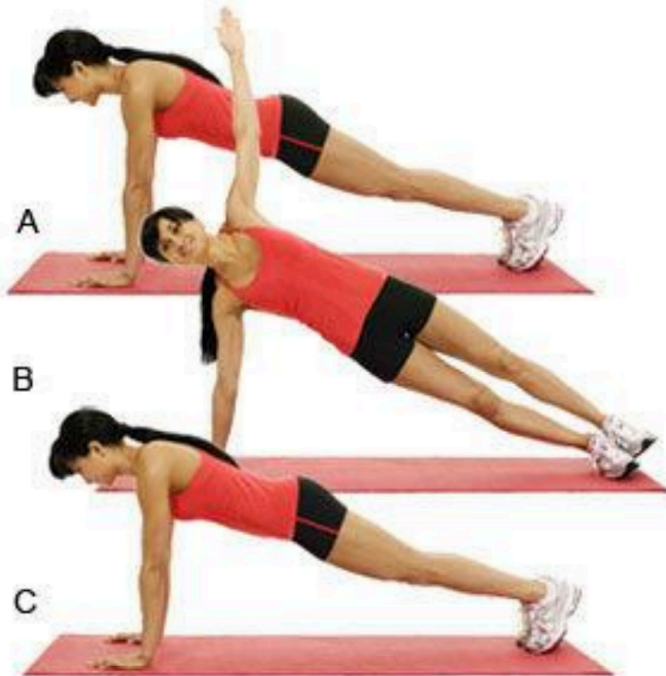
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Glut Bridge Knee Extensions: If you have mastered the above exercise, from the raised position, try extending one leg away from you to make it straight. Avoid the temptation to arch your back as you press your hips upward, keeping the core activated throughout.



(Advanced) Side Plank Torso Rotations: Start in the raised plank position with elbows straight and pushing through the floor with straight arms (A). Contract your core muscles without arching your back. Rotate to the side with one arm, pointing your arm to the ceiling (B). Hold 5 seconds and return to starting position (C). Repeat this on the opposite side for one repetition. Perform 10 repetitions.