

# Pregnancy Back Pain Exercises

If you have lower back pain during pregnancy you may want to try engaging and slowly strengthening the muscles of your core and pelvic floor. This will help give support to your lower back and the surrounding joints that are placed under strain with the increasing weight of your growing belly. The exercises below are at a basic entry level, which is a good place for everyone to start – even if you are used to doing more exercise, remember your body

is completely different when pregnant. Check with your doctor or physical therapist first to ensure you have the green light to exercise. If you find that these are too simple, your physical therapist can progress you on to more advanced exercises; however, it is best to do that during a consultation with guidance rather than venturing off on your own. If, at any time, you feel pain or discomfort during or after exercise stop and speak to your doctor.

## Set Up Your Position: Four Point Kneeling

Bring yourself onto your hands and knees. Your hands should be slightly forwards of your shoulders with soft elbows. Position your knees hip distance apart and directly underneath your hips. Lengthen the crown of your head so the head and neck are lifted in line with your spine. Adjust your lower back and pelvis into a neutral position, while setting your shoulder blades downwards and inwards. Engage your lower abdominal muscles at 30% of your maximum contraction along with a 30% lifting engagement of your pelvic floor muscles.



## Pillow Squeeze

Adopt the supine crook lying position. Place a small cushion between your knees keeping them hip distance apart. Inhale to prepare, exhale as you gently engage your inner thighs to create a squeeze into the cushion while lifting your pelvic floor. Maintain the squeeze for five breaths. As you exhale, release the squeeze of your inner thighs. Repeat.



SETS	REPS
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**Video:**
<http://youtu.be/eZebaKinw54>

SETS	REPS
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**Video:**
<http://youtu.be/y-n7kl8oQzk>

## Thread the Needle

Adopt the four point kneeling start position. Position your hands slightly in front and wider than your shoulders, keeping your elbows soft. Maintain a neutral spine and your lower abdominal muscles and pelvic floor engaged at the correct level. Keep your head lifted in line with your spine. Inhale to prepare. Exhale gliding your right hand and arm underneath your left shoulder as you rotate your mid and lower back to the left. Allow your head and neck to follow the same rotation looking towards your right hand. Bend your left elbow to allow your right arm to be close to the floor. Exhale drawing your right hand back towards the right, beyond the midline, rotating your spine to the right and your head and neck following your right hand. Repeat. Avoid hunching your shoulders towards your ears.

SETS	REPS
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**Video:**
<http://youtu.be/SFQ3F4SlwTo>


### Isometric Clam with Exercise Band

Adopt the side lying start position with a small cushion between your thighs. Tie an exercise band around your lower thighs. Lengthen your top waist so your hips feel stacked and you can feel a small space between your underneath waist and the floor. Keep your top shoulder drawn away from your ear. Inhale to prepare, exhale as you attempt to lift your top knee away from the underneath, feeling the resistance of the band. Inhale to relax. Repeat. This is particularly good if you are suffering with symphysis pubis dysfunction symptoms.



SETS

REPS

**Video:**
<http://youtu.be/ZYl-qrLebn4>

### Pelvic Floor Slow Contractions

Sit quietly and comfortably on a Swiss ball or chair, or position yourself lying down. Imagine that you are trying to stop your flow of urine midstream at the same time as stopping yourself from passing wind. The feeling is one of squeeze and lift around your front and back passages. Try and avoid pulling in your tummy, squeezing your legs together, tightening your buttocks or holding your breath. Send your breath into your abdomen, and on exhalation squeeze and lift gently with your pelvic floor muscles. Continue to hold in your pelvic floor muscles while breathing in and out. Strengthening your pelvic floor while continuing to breathe naturally can help with stress incontinence when coughing or sneezing.



SETS

REPS

**Video:**
<http://youtu.be/zFVWvPZ7Tg8>

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