

## SELF-HELP: PATIENT'S ADVICE

### How to stabilize my back

The modern approach to caring for your back involves simple, safe, effective exercises to nourish and condition the trunk muscles. The latest research tells us that exercise speeds recovery and can even minimize the severity of future episodes of back pain. Mild pain may be experienced at first, but this usually goes away quickly. The best exercises for the back focus on endurance rather than strength. This is good news since such exercises require far less load. However, it is important that they are performed slowly with excellent form. It is said "practice doesn't make perfect it makes permanent".

**Bracing:** For each of these "safe back" exercises, practice bracing your back by tightening your abdominal muscles as if you were being tickled or as if someone was trying to push you and you wanted to remain still. Be sure NOT to hold your breath at the same time.

### Advanced side bridge

#### Procedure

Lie on your side supported by your crossed feet and forearm. Lift your lower hip up a little so that your spine is not sagging towards the floor. Brace your spine. is in a straight line (side plank) lifted off the floor (see Fig. 4). After holding for 2 breaths roll onto both forearms (front plank), without twisting your torso (keep your pelvis and rib cage in fixed alignment) (see Fig. 5). Hold in this position for 2 breaths. Finally roll onto your other forearm (side plank) (see Fig. 6).

#### Troubleshooting

When you roll if your torso twists (shoulder moves more than hips) try to move them as a unit. If you feel pain in your shoulder grasp your shoulder with your hand and pull it firmly down during the side plank position (Figs. 7 & 8 ). Repetitions: 8-10 slowly with 2 breath holds in each elevated position Frequency: twice a day

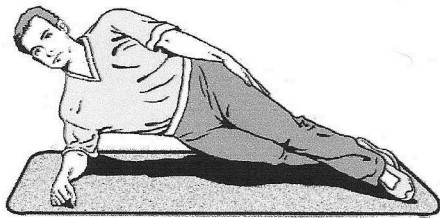


Fig. 4 Advanced side bridge on ankles - initial side plank position

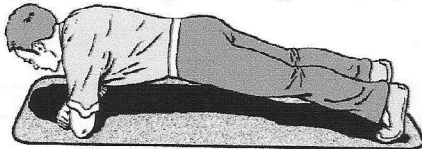


Fig. 5 Advanced side bridge on ankles - middle anterior plank position

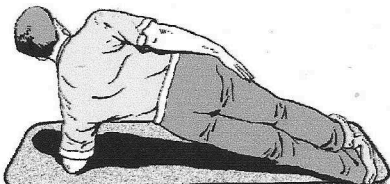


Fig. 6 Advanced side bridge on ankles - final side plank position

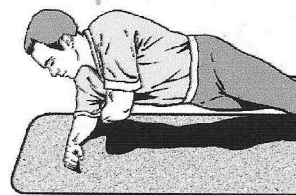


Fig. 7 correct

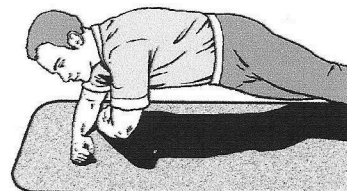


Fig. 8 incorrect