



VIRTUS

SPORT & EXTREMITY

Fix Your Back



Low back injuries can frequently lead to an intolerance for either flexion or extension movements, though this preference may vary from person to person. It's crucial to recognize which direction your back prefers and then manage your activities and exercises accordingly. When the low back is injured, it often becomes sensitive to certain movements. Some individuals may find it painful or uncomfortable to flex their spine forward (bending forward), while others may experience discomfort when extending their spine backward (arching backward). This sensitivity can result from various factors such as muscle strains, ligament sprains, herniated discs, or degenerative conditions.

Identifying whether your back prefers flexion or extension can help you make informed choices about your daily activities and exercise routine. For instance:

QUICK TEST:

Flexion-Intolerant Back: If bending forward triggers discomfort or pain, you may have a flexion-intolerant back, but let's try to be sure. It can be deceiving doing this while standing as compensatory muscles can cause pain and mislead you. Please first:

- Take a seat in any chair
- Place your feet hip-width apart and feet flat on the ground
- Gently fall forward letting your hands hang
- Support yourself with your hands if needed
- Once down it may feel tight but take a belly breath and try to relax the muscles
- lowest in your back
- Take two belly breaths relaxing more with each breath
- Come back up

If this causes significant pain at any time then you may be intolerant to this motion. If it feels relieving you should reference the "Flexion" section later in this document.

<https://VirtusClinics.com>



Extension-Intolerant Back: If arching backward is painful, you may have an extension-intolerant back, but again, let's be more specific. It can be deceiving doing this while standing as compensatory muscles can cause pain and mislead you. Please first:

- Lie on the floor, face down
- Prop up onto your elbows and take two belly breaths trying to relax the muscles
- lowest in your back
- Move into a partial cobra position and repeat breathing
- Rest back down

If this causes significant pain at any time then you may be intolerant to this motion. If it feels relieving you should reference the "Extension" section later in this document.

It's essential to consult with a healthcare provider or a physical therapist to determine your specific back condition and receive personalized guidance. They can assess your symptoms, recommend appropriate exercises, and develop a treatment plan to help you manage and rehabilitate your back effectively. Remember that a tailored approach is crucial, as what works for one person may not be suitable for another when dealing with low back injuries.

If pain is too significant, this will hopefully serve as a good management strategy until you can contact your provider, or after.



Home Flexion Protocol:

- **Perform Flexion Intolerant TEST Steps exactly the same as described above for 15 repetitions**
- **Knee-to-Chest Stretch:** Lie on your back, pull one knee to your chest, and hold for 15-30 seconds. Repeat with the other knee.
- **Pelvic Tilt:** Lie on your back with knees bent, gently flatten your lower back against the floor, hold for a few seconds, and release.
- **Single Knee Stretch:** Lie on your back, bend one knee, and pull it towards your chest. Hold for a few seconds and switch legs.
- **Double Knee to Chest:** Bring both knees to your chest and hold for a few seconds.

Home Extension Protocol:

- **Prone Lying:** Lie face down with your elbows under your shoulders, pushing your upper body off the ground. Hold for a few seconds.
- **Press-Ups:** While in the prone position, push your upper body up, keeping your hips on the floor. Hold for a few seconds and repeat.
- **Extension in Lying:** Lie on your stomach and gently push your upper body up with your hands while keeping your hips on the ground. Hold briefly.
- **Hip Flexor Stretch:** Kneel on one knee, push your hips forward, and lean slightly backward to stretch your hip flexors; hold for 20-30 seconds and repeat on the other side.

Remember, it's important to consult with a healthcare professional before starting any exercise program, especially if you have back pain. They can help you determine which protocol is suitable for your specific condition and guide you through it safely.