

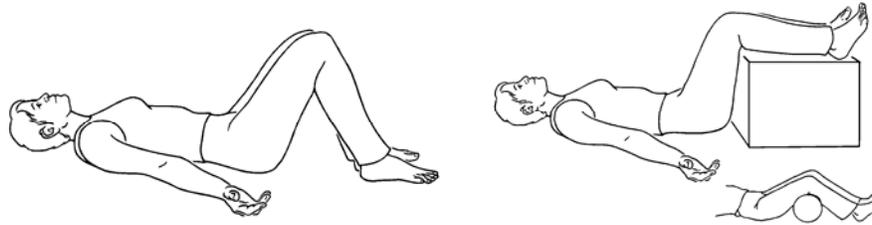
THE RE-ALIGNMENT ROUTINE©

SITE-SPECIFIC EXERCISES FOR STRENGTHENING AND FLEXIBILITY

These exercises are designed specifically for relief of back pain and postural correction and target the back and hip extensors, the strength of which helps to minimize the risk of compression fractures in persons with osteoporosis. When the body is better aligned, the weight-bearing and muscle-contraction forces should be more balanced and effective for general back health and for bone strengthening.

ON YOUR BACK

DECOMPRESSION EXERCISE



Supine lying. On your back. Increase tolerance for lying on your back. Lie on your back on the firmest surface you can tolerate. Bend hips and knees and place feet flat. Turn palms upward and slide arms out from sides of body about 45 degrees – arms midway between shoulder level and sides of body. Your head should not tilt forward or back—have someone look at you from the side to ascertain that your head and neck are as neutral as possible.

If your head tends to tilt back, support your HEAD with a folded towel or small pillow. Less is More--do not over-support—use as much as you need but as little as possible.

If your head tilts forward (chin towards chest,) support your NECK with a rolled-up small towel or even a washcloth. Again, Less is More.

Your shoulders should be slightly higher than your elbows. If your shoulders protrude forward—shoulders quite noticeably above elbows or if you feel shoulder or upper arm strain—support your ELBOWS and lower arm with folded towels. Again, Less is More.

This position should be relaxing and comfortable. The idea is to relax your back and allow it to re-align in this gravity-neutral position. 5-15 minutes 1-3X daily.

NO READING, TV, CATS, DOGS, KIDS, LIFTING WEIGHTS, TEXTING OR TWEETING

If you have back pain in this position, you may need to get into the 90/90 position. Lie on the floor (or the firmest surface you can tolerate) with your hips and knees each bent to a 90° angle and supported on pillows, a sofa or chair. Alternatively, place a bolster or pillow under your knees.

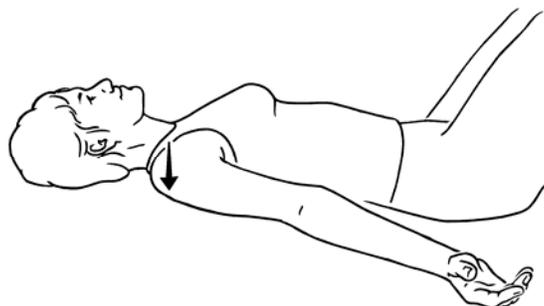
Benefits: (1) Takes compression off vertebral bodies; (2) Imparts a tensile (lengthening) force on the spine; (3) Increases tolerance for lying on the back; (4) Allows for re-hydration of the intervertebral discs; and
(5) Helps relieve back pain

If this position does not relieve back pain or causes more pain, then I would suggest you see a physical therapist trained in The Meeks Method.

THIS IS THE “SINGLE BEST EXERCISE FOR MOST BACK PAIN”

Not all you can do but a good start

SHOULDER PRESS



Lie on back as in Decompression Exercise (#1). Begin by identifying your collar bones. Lengthen out through the ends of the collarbones, then continue that movement by pressing the backs of your shoulders downward towards supporting surface. Hold 2-3 seconds. Relax. 3-8X.

- Benefits:** (1) Strengthens scapular retractors and upper back extensors;
(2) Stretches pectoral muscles across the front of the chest.

HEAD PRESS



A.



B.

Lie on back as in Decompression Exercise (# 1). There are two variations to this exercise. Do the one that is best for you based on head positioning in Decompression Exercise.

_____Variation A: For head that is tilted with chin facing upward (cervical extension) or for head that is in neutral position. Tuck chin **SLIGHTLY** towards chest. Feel lengthening on back of neck.

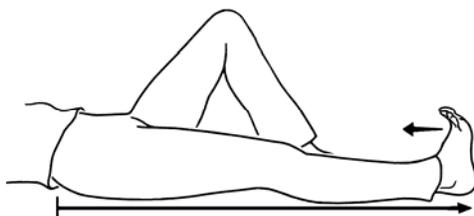
_____Variation B: For head that is tilted with chin facing downward towards chest (cervical flexion.) Tilt chin **SLIGHTLY** upward.

After you complete your head positioning, feel weight on back of head. Press head downward into supporting surface. Less is More. Begin with a light press and then heavier as it is comfortable for you to do. This exercise should not cause pain.

- Benefits:** (1) Strengthens muscles on the back of the neck that hold the head up against gravity; (2) Helps to align the head over the vertebral column;
(3) Stretches muscles on the front of the neck.

Precaution: Once you have determined the position of your head for the press itself, DO NOT move your chin during the press. The idea is to press your head when your neck is in a more neutral position. This exercise is a two-part movement—adjust your chin and then press your head.

LEG LENGTHENER



Lie on back as in Decompression Exercise (# 1). Straighten one leg down to the supporting surface. Keep leg in alignment (do not rotate or slide it outward); knee cap should face directly up towards ceiling. With knee as straight as you can get it, lengthen the lower leg out through the HEEL, bringing the toes and forefoot upward towards the knee. Relax. Repeat 1X. Do other leg. 2-3 "sets" on each leg for a total of 4-6 lengtheners each side.

_____Variation 1: Lengthen the leg by pulling the pelvis away from the rib cage.

_____Variation 2: Lengthen the leg by imagining that you are pressing the bottom of your foot into a wet-concrete or soft-sand wall, such that you could make a mold of your foot on the wall. Keep heel lengthened outward and toes and forefoot upward as you do the "mold, hold, and relax."

Benefits: (1) Lengthens the muscles between the ribs and pelvis; (2) Stretches the calf, back of the knee, front of the hip.

LEG PRESS



Lie on back as in Decompression Exercise (# 1). Straighten one leg down to the supporting surface. Keep leg in alignment (do not rotate or slide it outward); knee cap should face directly up towards ceiling. With knee as straight as you can get it, lengthen out through the HEEL and pull toes and forefoot upward towards the knee. Imagine you are lying on a nice, warm, sunny beach; press your entire leg down into the sand as if to make an impression of your entire leg in the sand.....do NOT press just the heel of the foot. Hold 2-3 seconds. Relax. Repeat 1X. Do other leg. Do 2-3 "sets" on each leg for a total of 4-6 presses. Then do both legs together.

Benefits: 1. Strengthens the gluteal muscles, knee extensors, and ankle dorsi-flexors (muscles that pick up front of foot during walking);
2. Stretches muscles on the front of the hip.

©THE MEEKS METHOD 2006

This exercise routine is the original work of Sara M. Meeks, P.T., M.S., G.C.S. and, as such, may be used only by permission of the author. Please contact Sara through the website

www.sarameekspt.com for more information.

(Revised 10/14/2012)