

ANKYLOSING SPONDYLITIS EXERCISES

EXERCISE 1: SEATED ROTATION

- Begin the exercise sitting straight on a chair or exercise ball, feet flat on the ground and your head facing forward.
- Place your left arm behind your left buttocks and your right hand on your left knee. Rotate your trunk looking over your left shoulder – holding when you feel a slight stretch but are still comfortable. Hold position for a few seconds.
- Swap sides and repeat exercise.
- Complete two turns per side.



Please note: Chairs with arm rests are helpful for this exercise as it helps you to lever off the arm rest as opposed to your thigh.

EXERCISE 2: HEAD TURNING

- Sitting on an exercise ball or chair, slowly turn your head to the right, looking over your right shoulder but keeping your trunk facing forward.
- Place your left hand behind you to stop extra rotation through the spine. Hold for a few seconds.
- You may place your right hand on your front (left) jaw line to help your head turn a little further.
- Slowly turn your head back to the centre and repeat on the other side, swapping hands.
- Repeat the exercise twice on each side.



EXERCISE 3: TRUNK CURL AND STRETCH

- Sitting on an exercise ball or normal chair, start in an upright posture, facing forward with your hands on your knees.
- Slowly roll down the spine one section at a time, running your hands down the legs until you feel a stretch through your spine.
- When you achieve this final position, let your head hang heavy so that it's a dead weight hanging from your shoulders. Hold for the count of 10.
- Slowly roll your spine back to an upright position, bringing your palms facing forwards and feeling a stretch across the chest.
- Repeat the exercise. As you roll back down and reach the bottom, this time exhale a full breath out.
- Rolling back up, when you reach the top – face palms forward and inhale a full breath.



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EXERCISE 4: FULL BACK STRETCH

a. Kneeling on the ground on all fours, start in a four-point kneeling position keeping your hands directly under your shoulders and knees directly under your hips. Breathe out as you sink into the stretch.

Please note: If you have sore knees feel free to kneel on a pillow/towel.

b. Slowly bring your bottom down towards your heels and your chest towards the floor, as far as you comfortably can. Hold the position for a few seconds. Remember to breathe out as you sink into the stretch.

c. Slowly move back into the starting position.

d. Repeat the exercise, trying to stretch back a little bit further each time. You should feel a good stretch the whole way through the lower back and shoulder blades.

e. If you would like to increase the stretch, place your hands to one side of your body and then draw your bottom back over the heels on the other side.

f. Repeat on the opposite side. You should feel the stretch between your shoulder and your hip.

Please note: This exercise is particularly good if you feel one side is tighter than the other.



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EXERCISE 5: BACK ARCH

- a. Lay down flat on your stomach and raise the top half of your body slightly off the floor by propping up your elbows – sink your spine, chest and shoulder blades down toward the floor making sure not to overextend the neck, rather look straight ahead. Hold for a few seconds.
- b. Relax and lower your body back down, returning to a flat position on your stomach. Remain here for a few seconds then repeat exercise.
- c. Allow your chin to drop down to your chest – this will provide a stretch through the back of your neck and shoulder blades. Then look forward and let your chest drop again.

Please note: This exercise helps maintain posture.

- d. To make the exercise a little more advanced – bring the hands back, level with the armpits. Perform the same movement but push up a little bit higher through the arms, making sure your hips stay in contact with the floor. Remain in this position for a few seconds and relax back down to the floor.

Please note: You should feel a good stretch, sometimes agreeable discomfort but certainly don't push through pain.

