

A strong back matters because...

- You can live an active lifestyle when your back is healthy
- You can have a successful fishing season (free of injury)
- You can continue with family commitments, recreational hobbies, repairs and maintenance, wood cutting
- Work can be hazardous given the unpredictable forces of nature and frequency of lifting. The stronger your core supporting muscles (pelvis, lower back, hips and abdomen), the better your balance, stability and posture

To reduce risk of injury avoid overexerting and allow time for muscles to rest and recover.



Preparing for the season

Maintain a healthy lifestyle (on and off season)

- Exercise year round
- Get proper rest
- Maintain a balanced diet



Fish harvesters

- Start preparing for the fishing season early
- Pace your activities, don't overexert
- Organize your equipment so it is within safe reach



Safety Tips

Fish harvesters

- Salt slippery surfaces (or place gravel in paint) and clean deck floor as needed
- Ensure no obstacles in walkways
- Maintain equipment regularly
- Two-person lift for heavy loads
- Wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - e.g. non-skid footwear, knee pads
- You know your boat. Assess ways to improve how work is done.
- Warm up muscles and exercise regularly (*see reverse*)



Fish processors

- Alternate tasks and/or work position with co-workers
- Use lifting devices (e.g. skids, roller conveyors, hand trucks and dollies) to reduce lifting and handling of fish crates
- Two-person lift for heavy loads
- Stay alert. Be aware of your surroundings
- Avoid overreaching. Keep elbows at your sides by bringing items closer
- Warm up muscles and exercise regularly (*see reverse*)

Making your back work for you!



Warm up your muscles before completing physical activities (e.g. lifting, gardening, shovelling, work duties, etc.)

Keep your back in mind

- Maintain a correct posture at all times and change positions frequently
- Use safe lifting and carrying techniques

Risks for back injury at work

- Poor lifting techniques
- Lifting or moving heavy loads
- Reaching and pulling
- Poor physical condition



Healthy Backs for Fishers and Processors

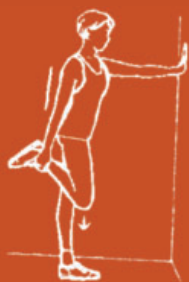
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Making your back work for you!

A minimum of 10 minutes walking, combined with a daily exercise program, can prevent or reduce lower back pain. Getting active provides both physical and mental health benefits. Always consult a doctor before starting any exercise program.

Always warm up muscles before you stretch and take part in physical activities.



Spinal mobility exercises

CAT and CAMEL

Starting Position: Kneel on “all fours” with knees under hips and arms straight under shoulders. Keep head straight with eyes focused on floor. **Action:** Slowly and gently let trunk sag so that back is arched downwards. Lift face up towards ceiling. DO NOT force the movement. Then, slowly and gently round back up at the waist while lowering head towards floor. DO NOT shrug shoulders. **Hold each position for 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times.**



STANDING EXTENSION

Starting Position: Stand straight. **Action:** Reach for ceiling with hands going overhead. Stretch pushing hands upwards. Breathe in deeply, hold a few seconds, and breathe out. **Repeat 4-6 times.**



Range of motion exercises

STANDING QUAD STRETCH

Starting Position: Stand straight. Place left hand against wall for support. **Action:** Grasp right ankle with right hand and bring heel towards buttocks so that knee is facing straight down towards floor. Be careful not to swing leg out to the side. **Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 4-6 times per leg.**



HIP FLEXOR LUNGE

Starting Position: Stand upright with feet together. **Action:** Step forward with left foot. Keep back straight, lower right knee to the floor. Keep left knee centered over left foot making sure not to let it drift forward in front of toes. Reach with right hand slightly forward and up over head to the left. Use a chair or wall for support if necessary. **Hold for 8-10 seconds. Repeat 4-6 times per leg.**



STANDING HAMSTRING STRETCH

Starting Position: Place one heel on a step or stool. **Action:** Keep back straight, bend knee of back leg and draw toes of elevated foot towards body. Slowly increase the bend in knee of back leg and bring buttocks towards floor. **Hold for 8-10 seconds. Repeat 4-6 times per leg.**



Core stability exercises

WALL SQUAT

Starting Position: Stand against wall with feet shoulder-width apart and slightly in front. Ensure buttocks, back and head are touching the wall. Tighten abdominal muscles (as if about to be punched in the stomach). **Action:** Slide back down into a squat position. DO NOT let knees go forward in front of feet. Goal: hips and knees at 90 degrees. **Hold 8-10 seconds. Repeat 8-10 times, 2-3 times per day.**



BRIDGE

Starting Position: Lie on the floor with hips and knees bent. Tighten abdominal muscles. **Action:** Squeeze buttocks together. While holding, lift buttocks off the floor. **Hold 8-10 seconds. Repeat 8-10 times, 2-3 times per day.**



ABDOMINAL CRUNCH

Starting Position: Lie on back, with one leg straight and one bent. Place a small rolled up towel under the small of back for support. Fold arms across chest or place behind head. Gaze at a spot on the ceiling throughout the exercise. **Action:** Tighten abdominal muscles. Keeping back and neck “locked together,” lift through breast bone to raise off the floor 3-4 inches. **Hold 8-10 seconds. Repeat 8-10 times, 2-3 times per day.**



SIDE PLANK

Starting Position: Relax on forearm and hips with knees bent. Ensure elbow is squarely under shoulder. **Action:** Tighten abdominal muscles. Straighten spine. Hinge hips forward and up so that knees, hips, and shoulders are in line. **Hold 8-10 seconds. Repeat 8-10 times per side, 2-3 times per day.**



BIRD DOG

Starting Position: Kneel on “all fours” with hands under shoulders and knees under hips. **Action:** Push with alternating right arm/left leg off the floor until the head glides up and both are raised straight and in-line with your back. Tighten abdominal muscles. Breathe normally. Ensure shoulder blades do not stick out, you are not sagging in the middle, and you are not tipping from side-to-side. Make sure hips and shoulders remain square to the floor at all times. **Hold 8-10 seconds. Repeat with alternating left arm/right leg. Perform 8-10 times per side, 2-3 per day.**

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