

MOVE BETTER, HURT LESS

Functional exercises for the most common everyday aches

Mark an X on each day you complete the exercise. Start gently: consistency matters more than intensity.

BLOCK 1 — LOWER BACK · EVERYDAY BACK PAIN

The most frequent complaint in my practice. It usually comes from a weak core and stiff hips, not from the back itself. Strengthening the cylinder around the spine is the best prevention.

EXERCISE	SETS	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Glute bridge	3 x 12-15							
Front plank (on knees if needed)	3 x 20-40s							
Bird-dog	3 x 10/side							
Dead bug	3 x 10/side							
Psoas stretch (lunge position)	2 x 30s/side							

BLOCK 2 — NECK & SHOULDERS · THE OFFICE DAMAGE

Hours in front of a screen shorten the chest and weaken the upper back. The result: forward shoulders and a loaded neck. This corrects it.

EXERCISE	SETS	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Scapular retraction (squeeze shoulder blades)	3 x 12-15							
Face pull with resistance band	3 x 12-15							
Chest stretch (in a doorway)	2 x 30s/side							
External shoulder rotations with band	3 x 12/side							
Gentle neck mobility (no forcing)	2 x 10/direction							

BLOCK 3 — HIPS · THE STIFFNESS OF SITTING

Stiff hips force the lower back to compensate. It's the hidden cause of much back pain. Mobilising and strengthening them relieves the back without touching it.

EXERCISE	SETS	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Box / chair squat (controlled)	3 x 10-12							
Reverse lunges	3 x 10/side							
Hip abduction (side-lying)	3 x 15/side							
Glute stretch (figure 4)	2 x 30s/side							
Hip mobility (circles on all fours)	2 x 10/side							

BLOCK 4 — KNEES · CLIMBING STAIRS PAIN-FREE

Knee pain usually originates above (weak hips) or below (stiff ankle). Strengthening quads and glutes stabilises the joint and unloads the knee.

EXERCISE	SETS	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Wall sit (isometric)	3 x 20-40s							
Step-up onto a low step	3 x 10/side							
Seated quad extension (no weight)	3 x 15/side							
Heel raises (calves)	3 x 15-20							
Ankle mobility (knee to wall)	2 x 10/side							

BLOCK 5 — BALANCE & AUTONOMY · PREVENTING FALLS

Falls are a leading cause of fracture and loss of autonomy past a certain age. Balance can be trained, and these exercises do it safely.

EXERCISE	SETS	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Single-leg stand (next to a wall)	3 x 20-30s/side							
Sit-to-stand without hands	3 x 8-10							
Tandem walk (heel to toe)	3 x 10 steps							
Knee raise on one leg	3 x 8/side							
Farmer's walk (carry weight walking)	3 x 20-30 m							

REST / ACTIVE RECOVERY

REST — Listen to your body. Sharp pain is never normal: if it appears, stop and seek advice.

Notice: these exercises are intended for mild discomfort and prevention. If you have sharp or radiating pain, loss of strength or sensation, consult a healthcare professional before continuing.