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## Exercise

Exercise is vital to recovery and to maintaining a healthy spine. Consider it part of long-term health management and risk reduction. Regular exercise is the most basic way to combat back problems. However, if you already have an injury or damage to the spine, talk to your doctor or physical therapist before you start an exercise routine. You need to make sure the exercises you choose are effective and safe for your particular case.

Why exercise? Scientific studies have shown that people who exercise regularly have far fewer problems with their back. It helps strengthen the muscles in your back that correspond with your spine. It can reduce your risk of falls and injuries. It can strengthen your abdomen, arms, and legs, which reduces back strain. Stretching reduces risk of muscle spasms. In addition, weight bearing exercises help prevent loss of bone mass caused by osteoporosis, reducing your risk of compression fractures. Aerobic exercise, the type that gets your heart pumping and pulse rate up, has been shown to be a good pain reliever as well. The natural chemicals of the body that combat pain - called endorphins - are released during exercise and actually reduce your pain.