

McKenzie Method Exercises Handout

MCKENZIE METHOD EXERCISES HANDOUT

The McKenzie Method is an internationally renowned approach for evaluating and treating musculoskeletal issues affecting the spine and extremities. Created by New Zealand physiotherapist Robin McKenzie, it has been practiced globally for more than 60 years.

7 MCKENZIE METHOD EXERCISES

This handout provides an overview of key exercises to support recovery, reduce pain, and improve mobility. Use this alongside verbal instructions to guide your clients.

- 1. Lying face down**This exercise involves lying flat on the stomach with the arms positioned by your sides. The goal is to allow the spine to relax and settle into a neutral position. Hold this position for 2-3 minutes.
- 2. Lying face down in extension**Starting from the face-down position, the individual props themselves up on their forearms with elbows under the shoulders and keeps the hips on the ground. If pain occurs, the elbows should be shifted farther out to lower the upper body comfortably.
- 3. Extension in lying**This exercise should only be attempted after completing the first two, ensuring leg pain has not worsened. The individual lies face down, places hands under the shoulders, and pushes up while keeping the hips on the ground and legs relaxed. Each repetition is held for 1-2 seconds, with 10 repetitions every 2 hours, aiming to push higher each time, and sessions spaced 3-4 times a day.
- 4. Extension in standing**Standing with feet apart and hands on the lower back, the individual bends the upper body backward at the waist without pain. The position is held for 1-2 seconds, with 10 repetitions performed every 2 hours, increasing the bend each time if possible. A countertop can be used for balance or support if needed.
- 5. Flexion in lying**The individual lies on their back with knees bent, lifts the knees toward the chest, and wraps their hands around them. The position is held for 1-2 seconds, with the head kept down and legs bent, and repeated 10 times every 2 hours.
- 6. Flexion in sitting**Sitting on the edge of a chair with feet apart, the individual bends forward to touch the ankles or floor, then returns to the starting position. This exercise is repeated 10 times every 2 hours, with each repetition aiming for a deeper stretch.
- 7. Flexion in standing**The individual stands with feet apart and arms at their sides, folding forward to slide a hand along the leg without pain. They return to the starting position and repeat 10 times every 2 hours, aiming to reach farther with each repetition.

WHEN TO AVOID MCKENZIE METHOD EXERCISES

Advise patients to avoid these exercises if they experience severe or worsening pain. Caution against performing them if there are underlying conditions, such as fractures. It's essential for patients to consult with a healthcare provider before starting any new exercise program.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Specify below: