Acute Care for Low Back Injuries

1. **Rest and Positioning:** Rest your back frequently. Choose comfortable positions and use pillows to help support your spine.

![Rest and Positioning Image]

2. **Ice:** Apply a cold pack, placed in a pillowcase, to the painful area for 15-20 minutes, 4-6 times per day.

3. **Body Mechanics:** When changing positions, gently brace your abdominal muscles and try not to twist or strain your back as you move. Roll to your side when getting into/out of bed.

4. **Walking:** Short, frequent walks will help keep your back a little looser. Stay on level ground and wear supportive footwear. As you improve, gradually increase your distance.

5. **Sitting:** Try to limit sitting to no more than 30 minutes at a time. When you do sit, use a towel roll or cushion behind your low back to provide support and help maintain the natural curve.

6. **Bracing:** Occasionally a back brace is indicated to help maintain function with more severe back injuries. Your doctor or therapist will advise you if this is necessary.

7. **Backpacks:** Try to lighten up your backpack and be careful when you put it on and take it off. Preferably, use a backpack with adjustable straps and chest and hip belts.

8. **Avoid:** Bending, twisting, lifting and the activity that may have caused your problem.
Exercises for Acute Low Back Injuries

Note: All stretches and exercises must be pain free.

1. **Exhale and gently pull belly button in toward spine with 25% effort, keep chest relaxed and breathe. Hold for 10 seconds and release. Repeat 10 times.**

2. **Single Knee to Chest:** Lie on your back with your knees bent. Use your hands to pull one knee up towards your chest, holding behind the knee. Hold for 10-15 seconds, and then slowly lower. Switch legs and repeat. Do 10-15 repetitions on each side.

3. **Double Knee to Chest:** Lie on your back with your knees bent. Use your hands to pull both knees towards your chest, holding behind each knee. Hold 10-15 seconds, and then slowly lower. Do 10-15 repetitions. Note: You can also add a gentle side to side rocking, with both knees up.

4. **Pelvic Rocking:** Lie on your back with your knees bent. Slowly rock your pelvis back and forth, to flatten your back out and arch it. Keep the range comfortable. Do 10-15 repetitions.

5. **Knee Rocking:** Lie on your back with your knees bent. Gently and slowly rock your knees side to side, letting your low back rotate; going only as far as you can without pain. Do 10-15 repetitions.

6. **Prone Press-Ups:** Lie on your stomach. Use your hands to gently push your shoulders/chest up, so you are resting on your elbows, keeping your pelvis on the ground. Only go up as far as you comfortably can. Hold for 10 seconds then lower for 10 seconds. Repeat 10-15 times.