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life made easier, every day

4 Back-Strengthening Exercises

Four easy moves that will strengthen muscles and keep you injury-free.

The Workout

These exercises were developed by Roberta Lenard, owner of Lenard Fitness, a personal-training company in Somerville, Massachusetts, and Anthony Carey, owner of Function First, an exercise studio in San Diego.

Hip Bridge

How to do it: Lie on your back, feet flat and hip-width apart, arms relaxed, and knees bent. Squeeze your buttocks as you lift your hips, creating a straight line from the knees to the shoulders. Hold for a slow count of two, then lower slowly. Build up to 10 to 12 repetitions.



Tara Donne

What it does: This move counteracts the effects of too much chair time, which puts excessive pressure on the spine. It stretches the hip flexors and strengthens the muscles that stabilize the spine, including those of the lower back, the gluteals, and the large, stabilizing abdominal muscles.

Make it harder: Lift one foot off the floor and hold it straight up toward the ceiling, foot flexed, keeping the hips even. This is much more challenging, so start by holding this pose for just a few seconds. Repeat five to eight times, then switch legs.