Exercises for Chronic, Widespread Pain

This strengthening and stretching program will help lessen your pain, and get you stronger and more flexible, so you can do the activities you enjoy with less pain and effort. Choose a time of day that best fits your daily routine. Please talk with your primary care provider or physical therapist if you have questions or concerns.

Strengthening

1. **Partial curl up**
   a. Lie on your back on a bed or a mat on the floor.
   b. Bend your knees and keep them hip distance apart.
   c. Cross your arms over your chest.
   d. Tighten your abdominal muscles and bring your shoulders and head off the mat or bed.
   e. Slowly lower back to the start position.

   Tips
   - Pick a spot on the ceiling and watch it to keep your head and neck in a good position.
   - Lift your head, neck and shoulder blades off the floor as a unit.
   - Hold your arms straight with your fingertips toward your knees to make it easier.
   - Put your fingertips by your ears and elbows out to the side to make it harder.

Repetitions	Number of Sets	Days per Week
10	3	3 to 5

2. Bridging

a. Lie on your back on a bed or mat on the floor.
b. Bend your knees and keep them hip distance apart.
c. Rest your hands at your sides.
d. Tighten your abdominal muscles and buttocks.
e. Push into your heels and raise your buttocks off the floor/bed to make a bridge.

Tip

Keep your pelvis in neutral position during the exercise. Do not arch or flatten your back.

Repetitions	Number of Sets	Days per Week
10	3	3 to 5

3. Wall push up

a. Stand at a wall with your feet hip distance apart.
b. Place your hands on the wall at shoulder height and shoulder distance apart.
c. Slowly bend your elbows and bring your chest closer to the wall.
d. Slowly push away from the wall until your elbows are straight.

Tip

Be sure to keep your feet flat on the floor.

Repetitions	Number of Sets	Days per Week
10	3	3 to 5

4. Wall squat
a. Lean your back against a wall or closed door with your feet hip distance apart.
b. Slide your body down the wall/door until you feel your thigh muscles working or you reach a position similar to sitting in a chair.
c. Hold the position, and then go back to the standing position.

Tips
- Be sure your heels are 18 to 20 inches from the wall.
- Your knees should not go out farther than your toes.

Repetitions	Number of Sets	Days per Week
10	3	3 to 5

5. Single leg stance
a. Stand at a counter or sturdy chair on a non-slip floor. Do this for arm support.
b. Lift 1 leg and stand on the other leg.

Tip
You can do this while brushing your teeth or doing dishes to fit it into your regular daily routine.

Repetitions	Number of Sets	Days per Week
10	3	3 to 5

6. Marching in standing
a. Stand at a counter or sturdy chair on a non-slip floor.
b. Start marching, lifting 1 leg at a time.
c. Lift your leg only as high as you can tolerate.

Tip
Breathe normally and tighten your abdominal muscles.

Repetitions	Number of Sets	Days per Week
10	3	3 to 5

Stretching

1. Hamstring stretch

Seated

a. Sit on a sturdy chair on a non-slip floor.
b. Bend one knee, putting your foot flat on the floor.
c. Straighten your other leg, keep your heel on the floor.
d. Gently lean forward until a stretch is felt behind your straight knee/thigh.

Alternate position for hamstring stretch

a. Lie on your back.
b. Raise your leg and hold the back of your thigh until a stretch is felt behind your knee/thigh.

Tip

Tighten your stomach muscles to support your back as you do the exercise.

Hold	Repetitions	Days per Week
30 seconds	3	Daily

2. Pectoral stretch (3 positions)

a. Stand in a doorway and place your hands on each side of the doorway.
b. For each of the 3 positions, take a small step forward into the doorway until a gentle stretch is felt in the front of your shoulder.
c. Repeat in each of the 3 positions
   a. Hands at hip level
   b. Hands at shoulder level
   c. Hands above your shoulders

Tip

Keep your back straight and tighten your abdominal muscles.

Hold	Repetitions	Days per Week
30 seconds	3	Daily