

Managing Ankylosing Spondylitis: Stretching Exercises

Do these when you wake up to reduce morning stiffness and help manage pain.
Stretching should not cause you pain.

- Do these exercises 1-2 times a day
- Hold each stretch for 15-20 seconds
- Repeat each exercise 3-5 times

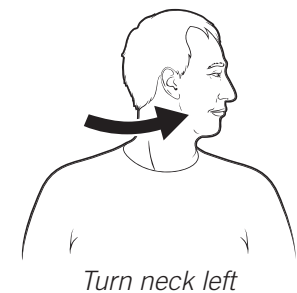
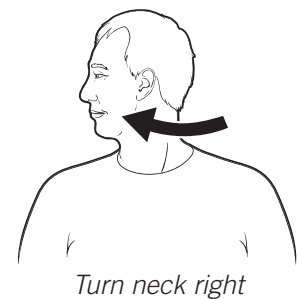
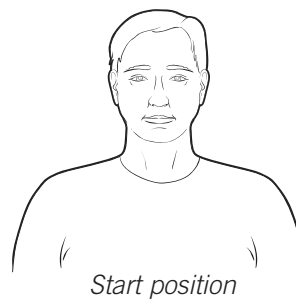
1 Neck Left/Right Rotation

Getting ready

- Sit with good posture

Instructions

- Look over your left shoulder as far as you comfortably can
- Now look over your right shoulder as far as you comfortably can



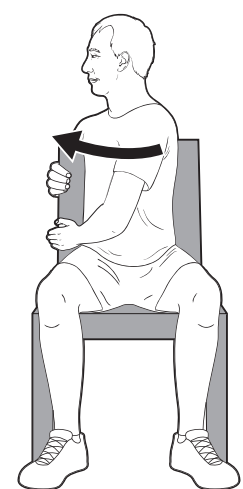
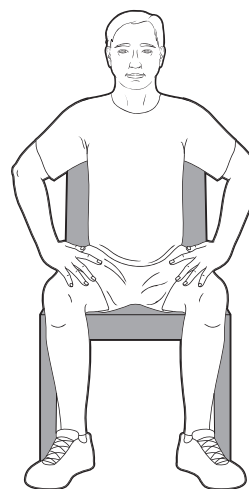
2 Thoracic Rotation (Chair)

Getting ready

- Sit with good posture in a chair
- Reach your arms around the chair as shown

Instructions

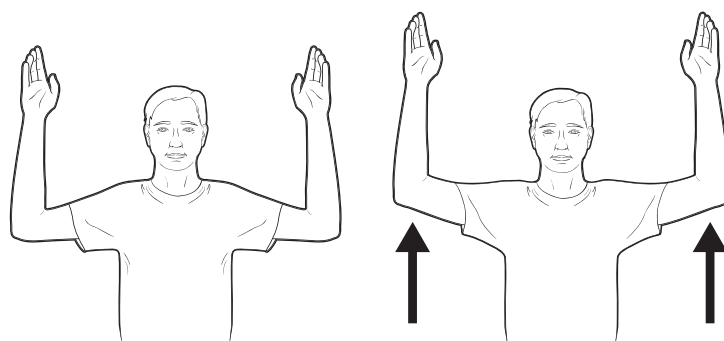
- Reach around the chair and pull torso into a twist - avoid movement in the lower back
- Feel a comfortable stretch in your upper back



3 Chest Stretch Standing (Wall)

Getting ready

- Stand against a wall, feet slightly away from the wall
- Raise arms up to shoulder height with elbows bent



Arms against wall

Slide arms up wall

Instructions

- Slide arms up the wall

4 Bilateral Knee to Chest Stretch

Getting ready

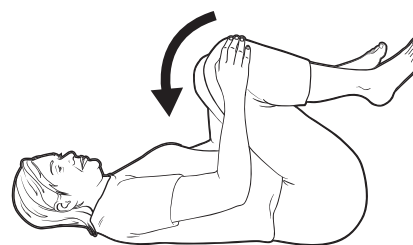
- Lie flat on your back with your knees bent

Instructions

- Start by pulling one knee at a time to your chest
- Then draw both knees up to your chest as far as you can
- Wrap your arms around your knees and gently pull towards your chest, feeling for a stretch
- Relax back down



Wrap hands around knees



Pull knees to chest

If you can't reach your knees, wrap a towel around your knees

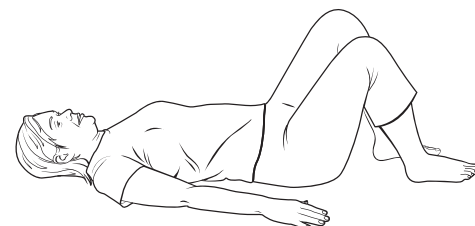
5 Spine Rocking

Getting ready

- Lie on your back with your feet flat on the surface

Instructions

- Keeping your knees together, drop your knees out to the side
- Feel a gentle stretch in the lower back
- Repeat each side



Knees together



Drop knees to one side