

# Keeping active with ankylosing spondylitis

It's important to stay active when you have ankylosing spondylitis – exercising will help ease stiffness and stop your muscles becoming weak. As well as the simple exercises in this pull-out, you should choose a form of exercise you enjoy and stick at it. Swimming and walking are great options if you have ankylosing spondylitis.

Try the exercises in this pull-out once a day, starting off slowly and building up the number of repetitions gradually. You can speak to your physiotherapist for further guidance and to check you're using the correct technique, or join your local National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society (NASS) group.

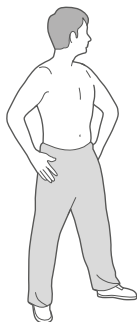
## Daily exercise programme

1



This exercise will help you to focus on your posture. Stand with your back against a wall with your heels, bottom and shoulders touching it as much as possible. Push (but don't tilt) your head back towards the wall. Hold for five seconds then relax. Repeat about 10 times. This can also be done lying down if you find this easier.

2



This exercise will help you to focus on your ability to turn your upper body. Stand in an open space with your feet apart. Place your hands on your hips. Turn from the waist to look behind you, keeping your knees and feet facing the front. Hold for five seconds. Repeat to the other side, five times each side. You can do this sitting down if it feels more comfortable.

3



This exercise will help you focus on moving your ribs, which will help with your breathing. Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor:

a) Put your hands on your ribs at the sides of your chest. Breathe in deeply through your nose and out through your mouth, pushing

your ribs out against your hands as you breathe in. Repeat five times. Remember, it's as important to breathe out fully as it is to breathe in deeply.

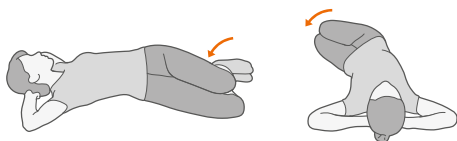
b) Put your hands on the upper part of the front of your chest. Breathe in deeply through your nose and then breathe out as much as you can through your mouth. Push your ribs up against your hands as you breathe. Repeat the exercise five times. You can do this exercise at any time in a lying or sitting position.

4



Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Lift your pelvis and lower back off the floor. Hold the position for five seconds and then lower down slowly.

5



This exercise will help you to stretch your lower back. Lie on your back, hands above your head. Bend your knees and roll them slowly to one side, keeping your feet on the floor

and your upper knee directly above your lower knee. Hold for five seconds. Repeat five times on each side.

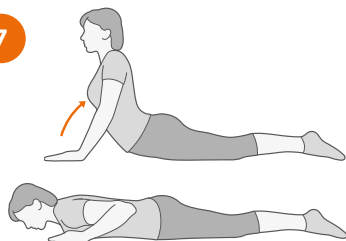
6



This exercise will help with your posture and strengthening your back muscles. Lie on your front, looking straight ahead, with your hands by your sides (you may put a pillow under your chest in order to get comfortable).

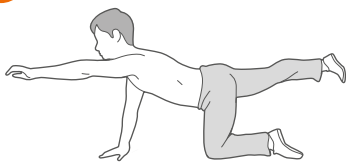
Raise one leg off the ground, keeping your knee straight. Repeat five times for each leg. It may help to have the opposite arm stretched out in front of you.

7



Lie on your front with your hands under your shoulders. Pushing up with your arms, lift your upper body, aiming to keep your hips and legs on the floor.

8



This exercise will help you to strengthen your upper and lower back and hips, which will help your posture. Kneel on the floor on all fours. Stretch your right arm and your left leg so they're in line with the floor. Hold for five seconds. Try not to twist your body or overstretch your neck. Lower and then repeat with the other arm and leg, five times each side.