



How To Exercise With A Disc Bulge

By
Sam Visnic NMT
www.EndYourBackPainNow.com

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How To Exercise With a Disc Bulge

A very common question that comes up is how to exercise when you have a disc bulge. My favorite approach that works very well in this situation is to always start with a group of movements developed by Robin Mckenzie, a renowned physical therapist.

One of these movements in particular, its called the Mckenzie Press-up. This movement only represents one of many in Robin's system, but I have found it to be one of the most important when working with individuals whom are suffering from disc herniations.

The principle movement that should be avoided in the case of a bulging disc is that of spinal flexion. Spinal flexion involves bending forward at the waist, as if you were bending over to tie your shoes. The majority of disc bulges involve posterior bulging, thus bending forward increases the pressure on the anterior side of the disc, which makes the disc material bulge even further in a posterior direction. This promotes the disc bulging even further!

The corrective motion is going to be extension of the spine, which will encourage movement of the bulge back to its centralized position. This is the magic of the Mckenzie Press-up.

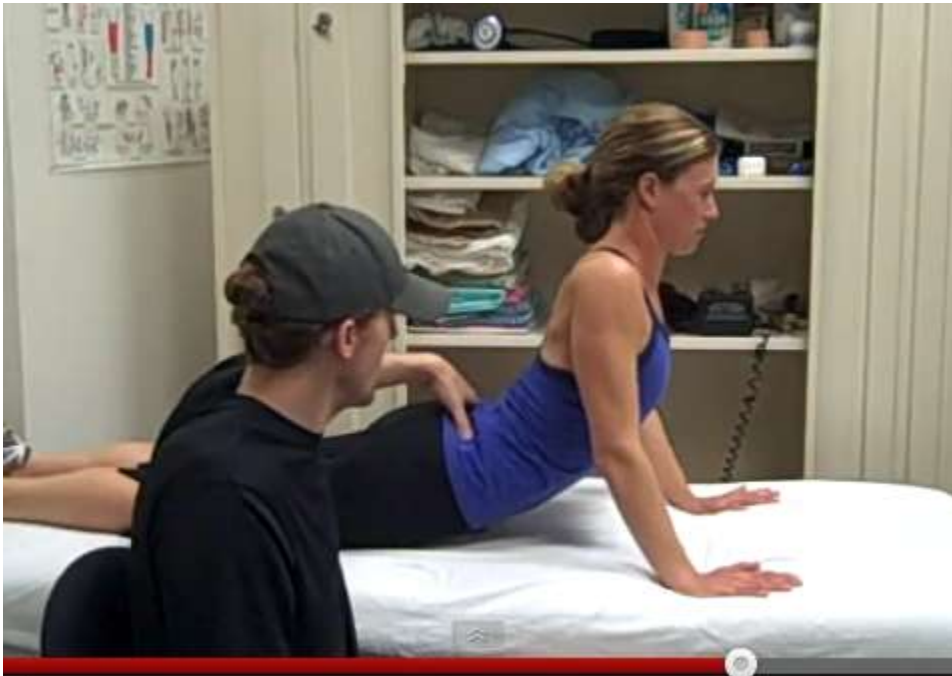
The goal of the extension exercise is to allow for the extension of your spine WITHOUT the activation of the muscles around the spine. Activation of spinal muscles may limit the effectiveness of the exercise.

The position to start with is simply laying face down. Ideally, a massage table with a face cradle would be the best option, as this addition will allow you to avoid twisting your neck. However, any place flat will do. In this position, the spine will be at a slight extension, and in many cases, doing this alone will bring relief to acute disc bulge pain relatively quickly. However, if the pain is coming from an excessively extended lumbar spine or facet joint issue, for example, the pain may actually increase with this position. If this position brings relief, it may be used for short or extended periods of time (up to 10 minutes) throughout the day as needed.



Progression 1

The progression of this motion is attained by simple propping yourself up on your elbows, as when a child is laying on their belly watching television. All of the weight is on the elbows/forearms, and the spine is allowed to "hang" in extension. This position is a big step forward for many, and may be tolerated for 60 seconds to 2 minutes at a time, with a brief rest, before attempting again.



Progression 2

The third progression of the movement is the full press-up. It is started laying face down with the hands placed slightly out in front of the shoulders, as if doing a pushup. Take a breath, then as you exhale, push yourself up until your elbows are almost locked out, or until a level of slight discomfort is reached. Avoid going into pain during this movement, and do NOT allow the pelvis to lift from the ground. At the top of the

position hold for 1-3 seconds, just enough time for the muscles to relax, then slowly lower back to the floor in a controlled movement. At NO time during this motion should there be ANY muscle activity in the lower back or glutes. This may take some practice!

It is very important to note that these movements are always tested for tolerance before being done on a regular basis. Every disc bulge is different, and some are very severe and may not respond to this movement without additional "precursor" movements. If, at any time they cause discomfort, the first step is to reduce the range of motion, then the frequency of how often they are done.

There is absolutely NO rush to progress these movements. Disc bulge pain can take weeks, if not months, to completely resolve. The goal of these movements is to reduce the pressure on the disc, and avoid making the situation worse by knowing which way is appropriate to move the spine, and which motions should absolutely be avoided.

In addition to these very simple progressions, I highly recommend you learn how to activate and strengthen your spinal stabilizers to achieve the fastest results possible in getting over your disc bulge pain. To learn more about how to do this, visit <http://endyourbackpainnow.com>