

## Thoracic Spine Exercises **Sharadha K**

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### Opinion

Cross your arms over your chest and place your hands on your shoulders. Stretch yourself several times with small movements over the fascia roller and roll back. This thoracic spine exercise helps mobilize the extension of your thoracic spine – for a more upright posture. The causes of thoracic spine syndrome can vary significantly. The most common reason is poor posture and not moving enough. Both of these are often caused by prolonged sitting at your desk with your back rounded, especially if your arms are stretched forward for things like computer work. Sit back, pushing your buttocks towards your heels, keeping your spine relaxed, until you feel a stretch in your upper back.

For an added stretch you can bend your elbows further past your head. Hold this position, and exhale fully. Reverse the motion to return to the start and repeat for 10 to 20 repetitions. While standing, make a fist with one hand and wrap your opposite hand around it at the base of your spine. Push up on the spine with your hands at a slight upward angle. Lean back, using the pressure of your hands to crack your back move your hands up your spine and do the same stretch at different levels. The most common symptoms of spinal stenosis include Neck pain.

Thoracic back pain is common throughout life but is not as well studied as neck pain or low back pain. Thoracic back pain is more often due to serious spinal pathology than neck or low back pain but thoracic back pain is also prevalent among healthy individuals without any serious underlying cause. Because pain in the thoracic region is often caused by muscle tension and poor posture, initial treatment efforts focus on relieving the tension with stretching, massage, and over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Heat and/or ice therapy can help reduce muscle pain and stiffness as well.

Exercise will also strengthen the muscle groups that support your mid-back to help relieve back muscle pain. Both specific exercises and stretches for this region together with general exercise, such as swimming, walking, cycling, is recommended. Avoid leaning to one side or slouching forward. Ultimately, your spine should be relatively flush with the back of the chair, arms at your side, head level, and legs uncrossed. When set up properly, good posture

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might feel awkward at first but it shouldn't be painful or feel too forced. Stenosis of the thoracic spine is relatively rare.

Spinal stenosis is generally a result of aging and degeneration and therefore most commonly presents in patients 60 years or older. Occasionally, younger patients may develop symptoms consistent with spinal stenosis. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as acetaminophen, naproxen, and ibuprofen can help reduce the inflammation which often leads to pain. Physical Therapy: Sessions of physical therapy exercises that strengthen the muscles in the thoracic region can contribute to lessening the pressure in the area. Thoracic back pain is common throughout life but is not as well studied as neck pain or low back pain.

Thoracic back pain is more often due to serious spinal pathology than neck or low back pain but thoracic back pain is also prevalent among healthy individuals without any serious underlying cause. Stenosis of the thoracic spine is relatively rare. Spinal stenosis is generally a result of aging and degeneration and therefore most commonly presents in patients 60 years or older. Occasionally, younger patients may develop symptoms consistent with spinal stenosis. The symptoms are often so gradual, that patients seek medical attention very late in the course of this condition. Patients may be so disabled and weak that they require the use of a wheelchair for mobility. In rare instances, severe spinal stenosis can cause paraplegia and/or bowel/bladder incontinence.