

Exercises for the Lower Back (Erector Spinae) (Important for strengthening the back — see chapter 12)

Hyperextensions (Back Extensions)

Major Muscle Group: Erector spinae (lower back)

Other Muscles Worked: Hamstrings, Glutes, Upper back

Lie face down on a hyperextension bench and tuck your ankles securely under the footpads. You should have enough room to bend at the waist without any restriction. Start with your body in a straight line and your arms crossed in front. Slowly bend forward at the waist as far as you can while keeping your back flat. Do not round your back. Slowly raise your torso until your legs and upper body are in a straight line again. Do NOT arch your back past a straight line. Repeat.



Superman

Major Muscle Group: Erector spinae (lower back)

Other Muscles Worked: Glutes, Obliques, Rectus abdominus

Lie face down on the floor with your arms stretched out directly overhead. Raise your arms, chest, and legs off the floor and hold for 2 seconds and squeeze. Lower back to the ground and repeat. You can also do these one arm and leg at a time as follows: Raise your left arm and right leg into the air at the same time, also raising your chest slightly off the floor. Hold there for a second and squeeze the muscles of your lower back. Lower your limbs back to the ground, and then raise your right arm and left leg and hold for a second. Repeat.

**Knee Tucks**

Major Muscle Group: Erector spinae (lower back)

Other Muscles Worked: Glutes, Obliques, Rectus abdominus

Start in a plank position on the ball, with the ball under the shin/ankles. Roll the ball toward you with your feet, tightening the abs in the crunch. As you push the ball out, focus on tightening the lower-back muscles as you straighten the back. Repeat.

