

Backchamp®

User Manual



# Thank you for purchasing the Backchamp®!

We hope that you benefit enormously from using it.

In order to get the most from your Backchamp®, please read this instruction manual thoroughly and proceed only when you are satisfied that you have properly understood all instructions.

Feel free to contact us at any time. We always look forward to receiving your questions, comments and testimonials.



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## Instructions

Please read carefully before use.

**⚠ IMPORTANT:** Always consult your doctor first before starting this or any other new exercise programme.

If you suffer from any of the conditions below, it is important that you seek expert medical help as they might indicate a medical problem that requires further investigation. (This is not an exhaustive list. It is intended only for your reference.)

- Chest pain
- Fever, nausea and / or unexplained weight loss
- Bladder or bowel dysfunction (not being able to urinate or hold on to your bowels)
- Significant pain at night time lasting for more than 4 weeks
- Shooting pain that radiates along the arms or down the legs
- History of cancer
- If you have suffered from repeated fractures
- Progressive weakness of your leg muscles with pins and needles

## How to use your Backchamp®

- To Assemble: simply slide the two rings onto the central bar and you are ready!
- The Backchamp® technique is divided into two parts, A and B. You should perform part A and then part B – and then repeat the process once more per session.
- Frequency: Most people benefit from two sessions a day – once in the morning and once in the evening. But this isn't set in stone. You can use the Backchamp® more or less often – whatever feels right for you.
- Important: When performing this technique, please check that there is at least a 1 – 2 inch space between the bar and the top of your legs; and that you first push gently until the hoops lock against the bar, and only then push at full strength. By so doing, you will ensure that the rings don't slip.
- You should perform part A at full strength. This means at full strength, while 'listening to your body' so that you don't strain yourself. Part B requires half strength.

## Part A: Rings inside the knees

**1(a) Adjust the Backchamp®.** On the central bar you will see 2 silver 'guidelines'.

These lines represent the suggested distance between the hoops to perform this technique. Slide the hoops along the bar so that each hoop sits over each of the two silver guidelines.



**1(b) Lie on your back,** face-up keeping head and back relaxed and flat on floor. While still in this position, lying on the floor, raise your knees up towards you so that you can place the Backchamp® between your knees. Remember to ensure a 1 – 2 inch gap between the central bar and the top of your legs.



**1(c) With the Backchamp®** between your raised knees, bring your feet together and lower your knees so that your soles are now flat on the floor, your feet are together and your heels are drawn in towards your buttocks.

Your knees should now be in a 'V' shape, your feet together flat on the floor and your arms by your sides.



- If you have difficulty raising your knees to place the Backchamp® in between them (as described above), then you can place the Backchamp® between your knees while in a sitting position and then carefully lie down – taking care not to strain your lower back as you do so. Then, if you want to return to the sitting position to adjust the Backchamp® once more, make sure you get up properly as outlined under 'Getting up correctly after a session' on page 6.

**⚠ When adjusting the Backchamp® while lying on your back, always raise your knees towards your body. Never raise your body towards your knees as this can place strain on your lower back.**

**1(d) Gently push your knees together until the rings lock against the central bar.** Once the

rings are locked, push your knees together as hard as you can without straining – against the outside of the rings – as if you were trying to make your knees meet in the middle. The rings should not move. Do this for a count of 8 seconds.

**1(e) Release and relax.** Now go to Part B below.

## Part B: Hoops outside the knees

**2(a) While still in position from Part A** – lying on the floor – raise your knees up towards you so that you can remove the Backchamp® from inside your knees. Bring your knees firmly together and close the Backchamp® rings to lock around the outside of your knees, ensuring that it fits closely against your knees and that there is a 1 – 2 inch (2.5 – 5 cm) gap between the central bar and the top of your legs. Now gently lower your knees so that your feet are together, soles on the floor.



**⚠ When adjusting the Backchamp® while lying on your back, always raise your knees towards your**

**body. Never raise your body towards your knees as this can place strain on your lower back.**

**2(b) First, gently push your knees outwards so that the rings lock against the central bar.** Your knees should be locked together by the rings. Now push your knees outwards at half strength for 8 seconds against the rings, as if you are trying to push your knees apart. The locked rings will stop your knees from moving apart.



**2(c) Release and relax.** Now repeat techniques A and B once more to complete a session.

## Getting up correctly after a session

⚠ Please ensure that you get up correctly after a session. Getting up incorrectly can strain your back.

**3(a) After completing a session** you will be lying on your back. Raise your knees to remove the Backchamp® from around them. (See picture)

**3(b) Place the Backchamp® beside you.** Then bend your knees and gently and slowly swing them to the left together – and at the same time rotate your head and upper body towards the left. (See picture)

(Please note: If you prefer, you can use these directions to get up in the opposite direction. Simply follow these instructions ensuring that you substitute 'right' for 'left' and 'left' for 'right'.)



**3(c) Using your right hand,** lift yourself up so that you are now resting on your left forearm as shown. Putting your weight on your right hand should allow you to free your left arm from underneath you. Then, using both hands and feet you can carefully push yourself up into a standing position. (See picture) Remember to get up slowly to avoid feeling dizzy as you do so. If you do feel a little dizzy then sit down for a few seconds until it passes.



## Using the Backchamp® while seated

Whenever possible and for best results, we recommend that the Backchamp® technique be performed while lying on your back as described above. However, this technique can be effectively performed when seated.

**4(a) Sit on the edge of a chair,** ensuring your back is straight.

**4(b) Now place your feet together** and follow the same procedure (as described on pages 4 & 5) as if you were performing this technique lying down.



## Some tips

- The Backchamp® technique is designed to be used reactively (when you're in pain) AND ALSO proactively (to prevent pain).
- In addition to your normal Backchamp® usage, it is recommended that you use the Backchamp® following any kind of physical activity, be it running, gardening, yoga, moving furniture and so on.
- When using the Backchamp® in the morning, it's best to do so after you've moved around as this allows your body to warm up a little.
- After completing a session (A,B,A,B) it is helpful to walk around a little. Movement will serve to oxygenate the tissues and supporting structures of your pelvis and back – and encourage healing.

## Additional stretches and mobilisation techniques

What follows is a small selection of simple and highly effective stretches and mobilisation techniques that have been handpicked by us to help you build a stronger, more flexible and pain free back.

Not all stretches are the same. We have chosen these for you because they are highly targeted at specifically combating back pain. Incorporating them into your daily programme will help to reverse years of bad posture, relax tight muscles, lengthen tight ligaments and mobilise (move) stiff joints.

Together with your Backchamp, we hope that you benefit enormously from them.

**! IMPORTANT: Always consult your doctor first before starting this or any other new exercise programme.**

Here are some important things to remember about these techniques:

- There is no rush. Listen carefully to your body and always perform stretches slowly, gently and exactly as described.
- Stretching should never hurt. If anything hurts then you are pushing yourself to hard. Start again more gently.
- In any stretch, don't try to stretch all the way at once. Build up your range of movement slowly and over

time, so that your body can adjust. This will speed up healing and minimise the likelihood of strain.

- Remember that the point of these techniques is to help you relieve your pain, not to see how far you can stretch.
- If you haven't already done so, then finish a stretching session by doing the Backchamp technique.

### TECHNIQUE 1 - The Three Stage Cobra

This technique is excellent for relieving tension and pain in the lower and mid back; and also helps to reverse the stresses caused by years of bad posture and too much sitting. It is an adaptation of an ancient yoga posture called the cobra.

It is a good idea to warm up a little before performing this technique – for example by first doing the 'lumbar rub' or 'standing back bend' as outlined below.

If you are suffering from acute lower back pain, it can be very helpful to perform this technique before you use your Backchamp.

This technique is made up of 3 simple stages. Always perform each stage in the order described. Never cheat and jump a stage, because this will make it less effective.

If possible, try to perform this technique once a day.

### Stage 1

Simply lie on your front, flat on the floor, with your head turned to one side and your arms by your side. (See picture below)



Breathe deeply and slowly. On each out breath, visualise the tension flowing out of your lower back. Feel those tight muscles releasing more and more with each breath.

Relax in this position for 2 – 3 minutes. Then move to stage 2.

### Stage 2

Now keeping your hips and lower body relaxed on the floor, slowly raise the upper part of your body onto your forearms ensuring that your elbows are in line with your shoulders. (See picture below)



While relaxing in this position, again focus your mind on releasing all tension from your lower back. Continue to breathe deeply and which each out breath, imagine the tension flowing out of your back and into the floor.

Relax in this position for 2 – 3 minutes, then lie down once more. Relax for a few seconds, then go to stage 3.

### Stage 3

From the lying position, place your hands on the floor under your shoulders as if you were going to do a push up. But instead of doing a normal push up, keep your hips and lower body relaxed on the floor and slowly raise your upper body. (See picture below)



Only raise yourself as far as you can go comfortably and hold for a few seconds while you concentrate on releasing all the tension from your back.

**! Important: Use only your arms to raise yourself. Your lower body should be absolutely passive, relaxed and floppy.**

After a few seconds, ease yourself back down again. Now repeat stage three, 5 – 10 times. Finish by doing stage 2 and then stage 1, and remember to get up off the floor correctly as outlined earlier.

### TECHNIQUE 2 - The Lumbar Rub

This is a quick and easy way to stimulate blood flow and healing in the lower back and you can do it as often as you like.

Simply clench your fists and place the backs of your clenched fists against your lower back. (See picture above)



Now rub your lower back vigorously in an up and down, side to side and circular motion for 30 – 60 seconds. (See picture above)



### TECHNIQUE 3 - The Standing Back Bend

The standing back bend is another brilliant technique for increasing flexibility, reversing the effects of bad posture, reducing tension and combating back pain. It's so quick and easy, you can do it anywhere and as often as you like.

Remember to perform this technique after lifting, bending over (e.g. gardening), sitting and exercising.

It's worth noting that people with back pain often do this stretch instinctively. However, they usually don't bend back far enough or hold the stretch long enough, so it doesn't work as well as it does when done properly.

Stand with straight legs, shoulder width apart. Reach round and place your hands on your lower back for support. Now, keeping your legs straight, slowly bend backwards as far as you can. Relax and hold the stretch for around 15 seconds, taking care not to fall over! Then slowly return to upright. Repeat as often as you like. (See picture to right).



### TECHNIQUE 4 - The Standing Hip Shrug

This is a very clever and effective technique for mobilising stiff joints in the back and hips. This movement also gently targets intervertebral discs, encouraging the 'pumping action' that they need to heal and re-hydrate. It is an excellent way to keep stiffness at bay. You can perform this technique as often as you like.

The movement can be a little tricky to coordinate at first – but once you get it you should find it very beneficial. The first few should be long slow stretches.

Stand with feet shoulder width apart and your arms relaxed by your sides.

Now raise the left hip as far as you can (lifting your heel off the ground slightly) while raising the right shoulder, so that you feel a stretch in your lower back and hips.

Next, do the opposite. Raise the right hip as far as you can and at the same time raise the left shoulder. (See picture below)



After alternating a few long stretches – and once you've got the coordination – you can speed up a little and shrug back and forth without going into the full stretch. Do as many shrugs as you like, occasionally putting in some long full-stretch shrugs.

### TECHNIQUE 5 - The Knee-up

A classic gentle stretch for the lower back, this is a great first aid technique when you are getting pain right at the base of the spine.

Start by lying on your back with your knees up and your feet flat on the floor. Then gently pull both knees up to your chest together and hold for about 4 seconds.

Repeat this exercise 4 times, stretching a little further each time.



Remember to keep your knees bent when you lower them down and your head and upper body relaxed and flat on the floor at all times. (See picture above)

### TECHNIQUE 6 - The Standing Side Bend

This simple stretch is great for counteracting stiffness and muscle imbalance along the entire length of the spine – particularly in the mid and upper spine. If possible, it should be performed once a day.

Start by standing with your feet shoulder width apart. Put your arms above your head with your hands clasped together, as if you were about to dive into a pool.

Then, with your arms straight above you, slowly bend as far as you can to the left and hold for 5 seconds. Try to keep your shoulders relaxed. Come back to the centre and rest for a couple of seconds. Then bend as far as you can to the right for 5 seconds. Make sure that it's just the upper half of your body that's bending side to side, with your lower half rooted into the ground.

Now that you're a little warmed up

do 4 more each side and hold the stretches for 10 – 15 seconds. Don't bend further than you feel comfortable doing – you can increase the range of movement over time. (See pictures below)



**TECHNIQUE 7 - The Forward Bend**

This is another good gentle stretch for releasing the muscles along the length of your spine. It is one that is commonly employed in a variety of



disciplines including Pilates.

You need to do it less often than the back bends because we all have a tendency to bend forwards more than backwards in our daily lives. Nevertheless, it's a good one to have in your 'back pain toolbox.'

Start by standing straight with your feet shoulder width apart.

Take a few deep breaths and then slowly lower your chin to your chest and start to bend over by collapsing your chest. Bend over slowly – as if you are going to touch your toes – vertebrae by vertebrae. When you are completely bent over, let your arms and upper body hang loosely like a rag doll.

Then, after a few seconds of relaxing in this position, reverse the process and raise back up to the starting position very slowly, vertebrae by vertebrae. Repeat this once more. It's always a good idea to follow this stretch with a few back bends as outlined in Technique 3 above. (See pictures below)

**Backchamp FAQ's**

**How does the Backchamp® work?**

The Backchamp technique is an adaptation of a technique employed by many osteopaths, physiotherapists and chiropractors. Muscle Energy Technique is derived from Osteopaths (the study of the musculoskeletal system) by Dr. Fred Mitchell, Sr. and his son Dr. Fred Mitchell, Jr. The theory behind MET suggests that if a joint isn't used to its full range of motion, its function will lessen and it will be at risk of suffering strains and injuries. This form of muscular therapy makes use of a patient's own muscle energy (the force); while the therapist (or in this case the Backchamp) presents a stationary surface (or anti-force) the patient will contract their muscle against in order to stretch the muscle and joint to its full potential.

Muscle energy techniques can be applied safely to almost any joint in the body. Many athletes use MET as a preventative measure to guard against future muscle and joint injury. However, its mainly used by individuals who have a limited range of motion due to back, neck and shoulder pain, scoliosis, sciatica, unsymmetrical legs, hips or arms (for example when one is longer or higher than the other), or to treat chronic muscle pain, stiffness or injury.

**How long does a session take?**

One session takes less than a minute to complete.

**How often should I use it?**

Most people benefit from two sessions a day – once in the morning and once in the evening. But this isn't set in stone. You can use the Backchamp® more or less often – whatever feels right for you. For example some people use the Backchamp® to help themselves out of an episode of pain and then use it occasionally when they feel their back 'going out'. Others, prefer to use the Backchamp® as part of a daily ritual – and as a preventative measure.

**Can I use the Backchamp® if I lie down on grass, lino, carpet, a bed etc?**

You can use the Backchamp® anywhere there is a reasonably firm surface that allows you to lie flat. You can also use the Backchamp® while seated in a chair.

**How long before I should feel the benefits?**

Again, this varies between individuals. Some people feel dramatic improvements after the first session, while others may take a little longer. Most people experience significant improvement within a few days.

**Does it hurt?**

No. Some people occasionally report feeling a little achy after a session, but this is normal (like the healthy ache you can feel after exercise) and is different from pain.

### **Can you guarantee that the Backchamp® will cure my back problem?**

Sadly no. The very individual nature of back problems means that unfortunately no treatment – ours included – can guarantee you a successful outcome. And while most customers experience significant improvement in their condition by using the Backchamp®, a small percentage of users may experience little or no improvement in their condition – as is the case in any treatment.

### **I have a heart condition / other condition, is it safe to use it?**

The Backchamp® technique is safe for most people because it is a natural movement that requires a moderate effort over a short time to perform. However, always consult your doctor first before starting this or any other new exercise programme.

### **Can I use the Backchamp® while having other treatments or therapies?**

Yes. Aligning, strengthening and stabilizing your pelvis and lumbar spine will help you get maximum benefit from other treatments, as well as empowering you in between sessions. Seeing a good Osteopath is always highly recommended.

### **Using the Backchamp isn't stopping my pain OR it doesn't stop my pain like it used to:**

If you have just started using the Backchamp® and you're not getting the results you hoped for, or you've been using the Backchamp for some time and it doesn't seem to be

working as well as it used to, then you may find the following useful:

- Arrange to see a good Osteopath – ideally one that has been recommended to you.
- Ensure that you are putting enough strength in 'Part A' of the Backchamp® technique.
- Carefully follow the techniques outlined above under 'Additional stretches and mobilisation techniques'.
- Try to remain positive. Be patient. Remind yourself that unless you have had a recent trauma, the chances are that your back pain has developed slowly over many years – because your spine and surrounding structures haven't been moving as they should. This will take time to reverse. The nature of the human skeleton is such that you cannot force the pace. Something that has developed over many years will take time to reverse. Persevere with aligning your pelvis, gentle stretches and mobilising your joints and you'll get there!
- Everyone is slightly different – and this cliché also applies to back pain and recovery rates. Your general state of health and your lifestyle will also impact upon your recovery rate. Therefore, take time to eat healthily, and try to walk every day. If possible, in addition to the techniques outlined above, it is also recommended that you begin a form of physical activity

that will gently encourage your spine to become stronger and more flexible. You may find Pilates, Yoga, Gyrotonics or Tai Chi helpful in this regard.

### **It hurts when I use the Backchamp or I feel achy afterwards:**

If you find using the Backchamp® painful – or you are unable to put enough strength into Part A of the system without pain – then we recommend that you have a rest from the Backchamp® and get some treatment or concentrate on gentle stretching and walking until you feel better. Remember to distinguish between pain and a 'gentle ache' that is commonly felt when alignment takes place. This gentle aching sensation is normal and is different from pain. Gentle aching can be a sign that you are successfully re-training your muscles and ligaments away from their habitual distorted position.

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