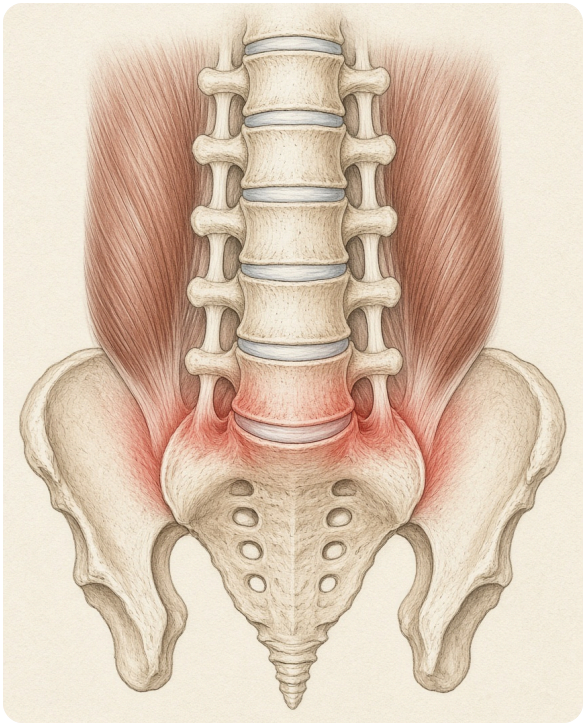
ARMIN PHYSIO



PATIENT GUIDE

Ankylosing Spondylitis

Back pain and stiffness that gets better when you move? It could be **ankylosing spondylitis.**

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What is ankylosing spondylitis?

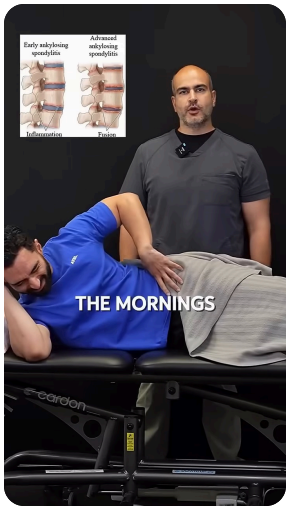
Ankylosing spondylitis is a long-term inflammatory condition that mainly affects the spine and the sacroiliac joints. Unlike most mechanical back pain, it often **improves with movement and gets worse with rest**. It needs a diagnosis and ongoing care from your doctor, and regular exercise is a key part of managing it.

QUICK CHECK

Does this sound like you?

- [ ] Your back feels **extra stiff in the mornings**
- [ ] **Losing general mobility** in your low back due to pain or stiffness
- [ ] You **feel better as the day goes on** or with exercise
- [ ] Pain or stiffness after **sitting or resting a long time**
- [ ] Pain that **comes and goes** in flare-ups

If you ticked a few boxes, see your doctor for an assessment. Try the 3 exercises on the next pages.



Extra stiff in the mornings



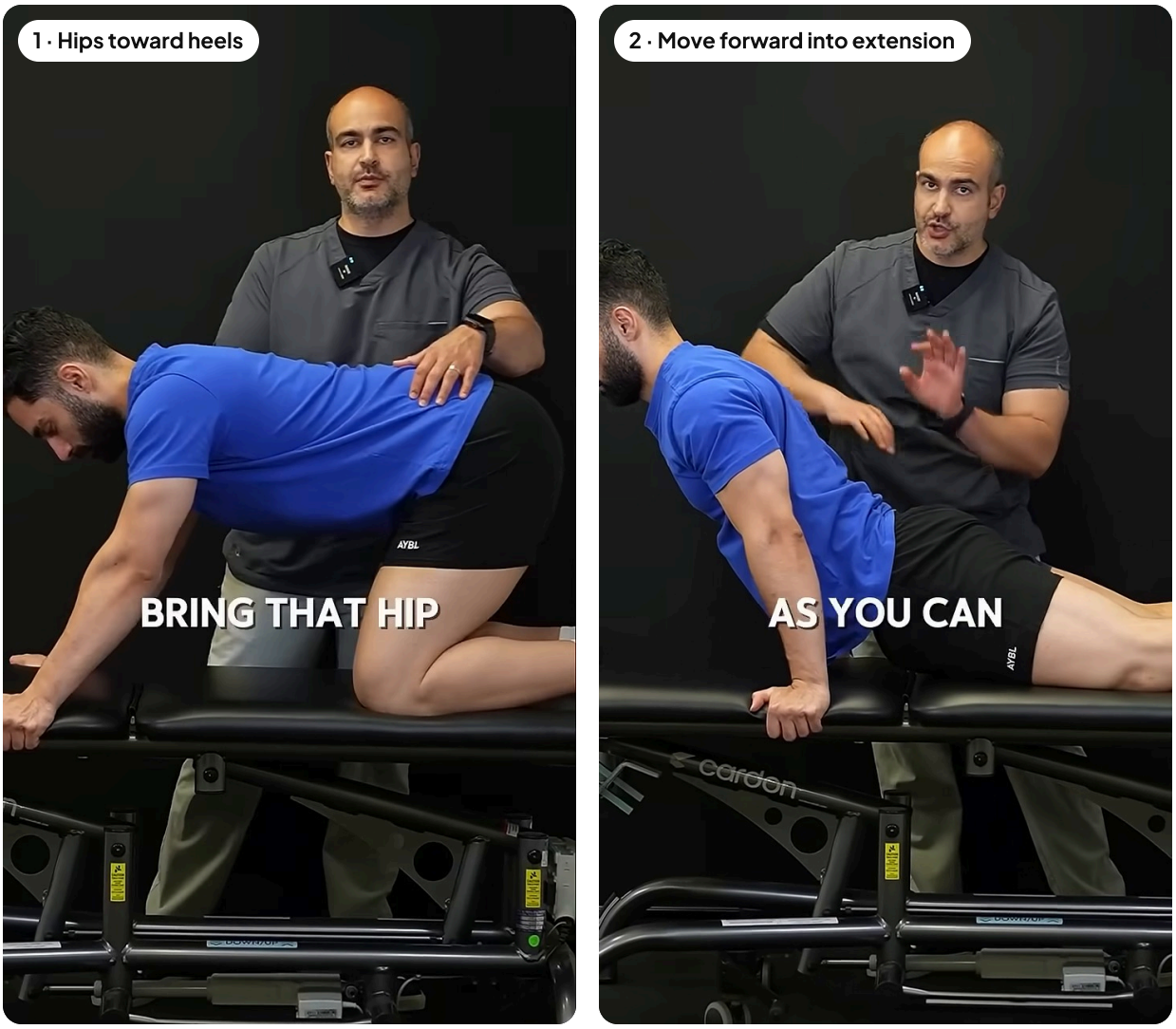
Losing mobility in the low back

YOUR 3 EXERCISES

Try these exercises

1 Rock back and extend

Moves the low back through flexion and extension



1. **Get down on your hands and knees** like so.
2. **Bring that hip towards your heels** as much as you can, rounding out the low back.
3. Then **move forward**, pushing the low back into extension.
4. Go only as far as you can tolerate, **come right back** and repeat.

2–3 sets of 10, slow and controlled

Suggested dosing

Stop if you feel sharp pain, pain that goes above about 4/10 or keeps building, or pain, numbness or tingling travelling into your leg.

2 Side-lying open book

Creates rotation all the way through the spine



1. **Lie on your side** and **lock your legs** like so.
2. From here, **bring the arm up**.
3. **Try to drive this shoulder into the bed**, creating that rotation all the way through the spine.
4. **Go right back** and repeat.

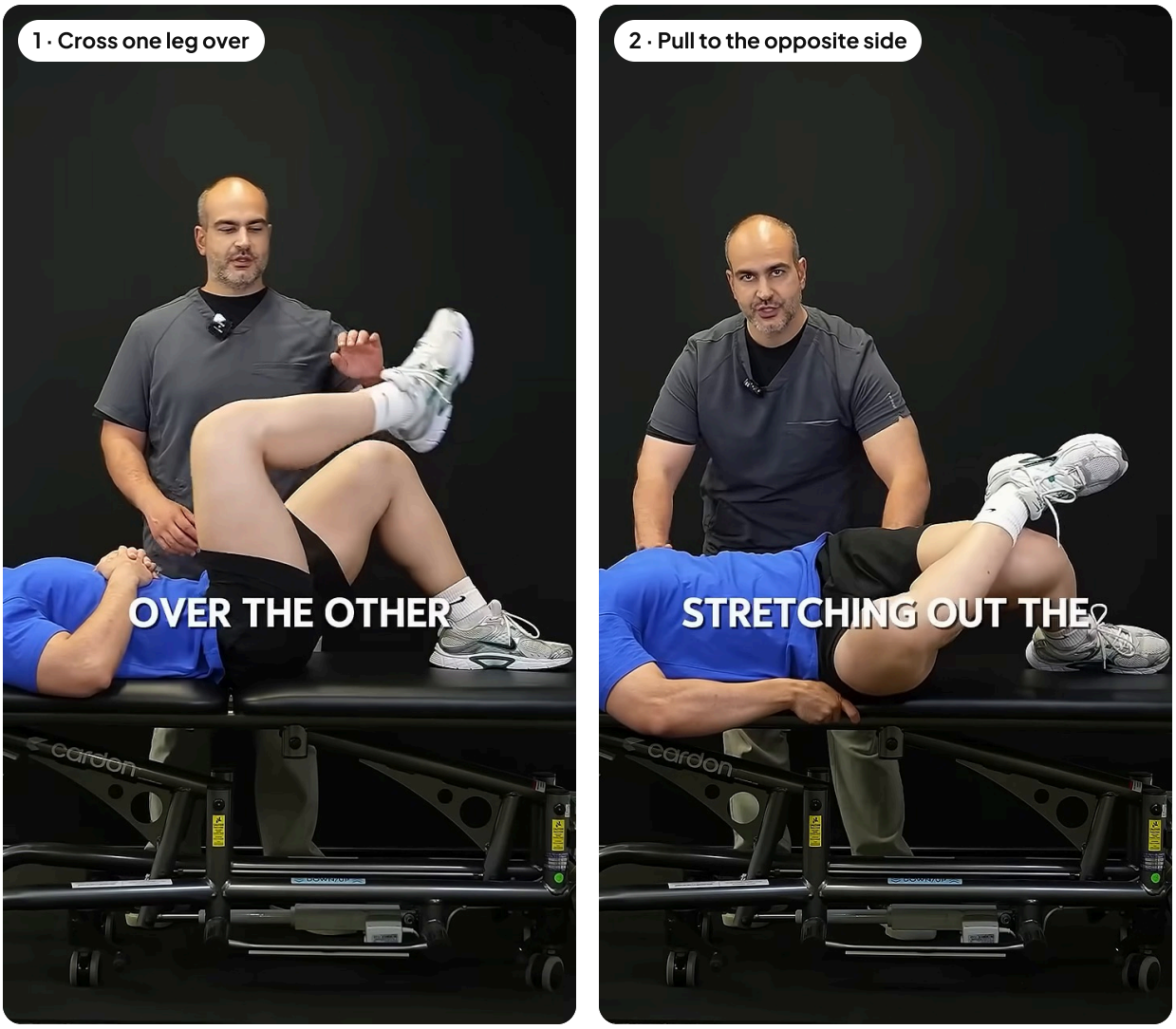
2–3 sets of 10 each side

Suggested dosing

Stop if you feel sharp pain, pain that goes above about 4/10 or keeps building, or pain, numbness or tingling travelling into your leg.

3 Lying cross-leg low back stretch

Stretches the low back and mobilizes the lumbar spine



1. **Lie on your back** and **cross your leg over the other** just like so.
2. From here, **use this leg to pull the other one towards the opposite side**.
3. This stretches out the low back, getting some mobility in the lumbar spine.
4. **Come right back** and repeat.

2–3 sets of 10 each side

Suggested dosing

Stop if you feel sharp pain, pain that goes above about 4/10 or keeps building, or pain, numbness or tingling travelling into your leg.

DAILY ROUTINE · ABOUT 10–15 MINUTES

Put it together

01
Flex & extend
Rock back and extend

02
Rotate
Side-lying open book

03
Stretch
Lying cross-leg low back stretch

Armin's description says to do these regularly, slowly and with control, focusing on consistency rather than pushing through significant pain. His description gives no set counts, so the 2–3 sets of 10 and doing it daily (mornings are often helpful) are suggestions. Suggested: mild discomfort up to about **4/10** is OK. Don't push through significant pain.

Stop the exercise if you notice

- Sharp pain, or pain above about 4/10 that keeps building
- Pain, numbness or tingling travelling into your leg
- Pain that lingers or is worse the next day

During a flare-up, keep moving gently but reduce the range and reps. Keep up regular check-ins with your doctor.

SAFETY FIRST

Get checked right away if you have

- **Numbness in the groin or saddle area**, or new **bladder or bowel** changes (trouble peeing, or losing control)
- Leg **weakness that is getting worse quickly**, foot drop, or symptoms in **both legs**
- Back pain after a **fall, accident or heavy impact**
- Back pain with **fever**, feeling unwell, or **unexplained weight loss**
- **Constant pain at night** that doesn't ease with rest or changing position
- A history of **cancer**, osteoporosis or long-term steroid use with new back pain
- **A red, painful eye** or blurred vision (see a doctor the same day)

For numbness in the groin or saddle area, new bladder or bowel changes, or quickly worsening leg weakness, **go to the nearest emergency department right away**. For the others, see a doctor promptly. If your back isn't improving after a few weeks, **book an assessment**.

FREE · STAY IN THE LOOP

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NEED MORE HELP?

Book an assessment with Armin

In clinic or virtually. See current options and times at the link.

Scan to book

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Disclaimer: This handout is for education only. It is not a diagnosis or medical advice and does not replace an assessment by a qualified health professional. If you're unsure whether these exercises are right for you, check with your physiotherapist or doctor first.

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