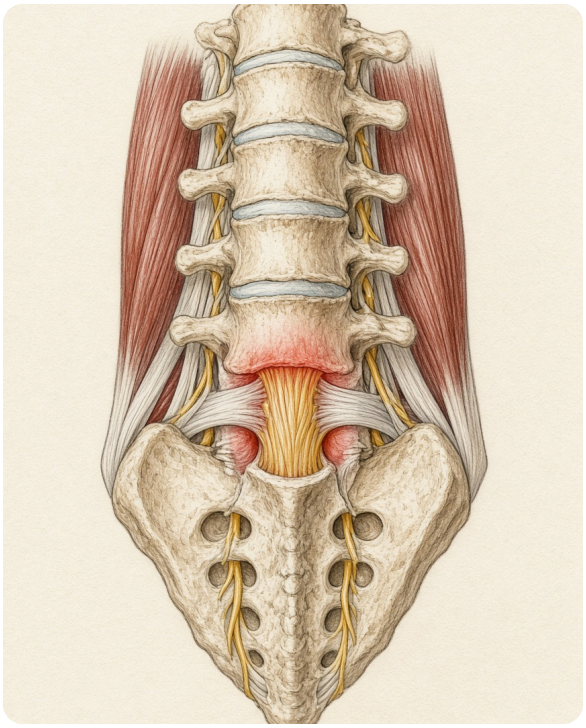
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PATIENT GUIDE

Spinal Stenosis

Leg pain or heaviness when walking? It could be **spinal stenosis.**

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Physiotherapist · arminphysio.com

What is spinal stenosis?

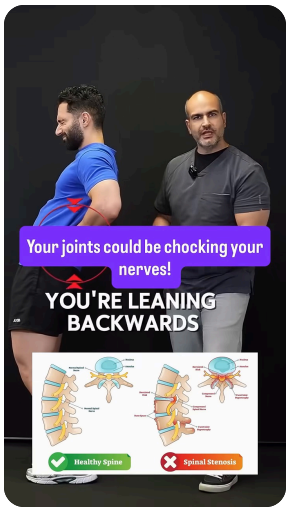
Lumbar spinal stenosis happens when the spaces around the nerves in your lower back become narrowed. This can irritate the nerves and cause symptoms into the buttocks and legs, especially with prolonged standing or walking. Bending forward opens those spaces, which is why it often eases when you sit or lean forward. Stenosis doesn't automatically mean surgery: many people improve their walking tolerance and strength with the right program.

QUICK CHECK

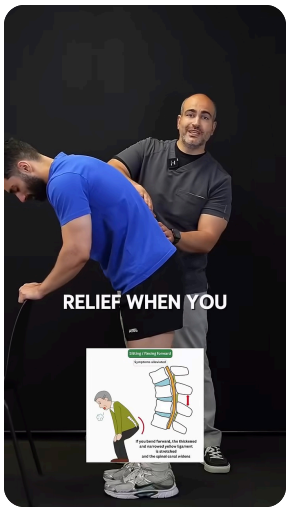
Does this sound like you?

- [ ] Pain in your low back when you **lean backwards**
- [ ] **Relief when you lean forward**, sit, or lean on a shopping cart
- [ ] **Heaviness, aching or weakness** in the legs when walking
- [ ] **Numbness or tingling** into one or both legs
- [ ] Pain when you **lie on your stomach**

If you ticked a few boxes, stenosis could be part of the picture. Try the 3 exercises on the next pages.



Pain when you lean backwards



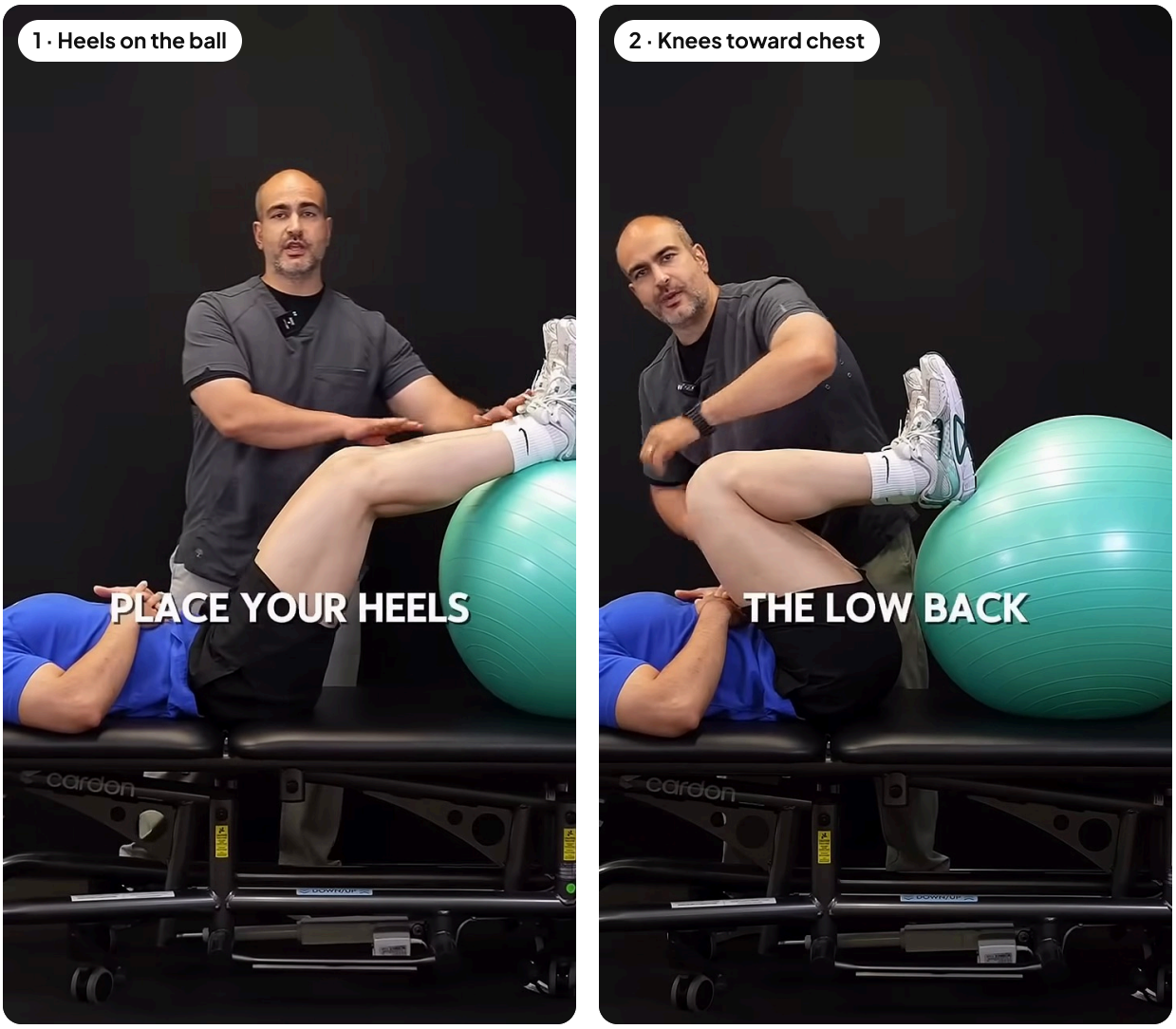
Relief when you lean forward

YOUR 3 EXERCISES

Try these exercises

1 Ball knees-to-chest

Rounds out the low back to open up space for the nerves



1. **Lie on your back** and **place your heels on a ball**.
2. **Bring your knees up towards your chest**, really rounding out the low back, increasing that space.
3. **Go right back** and repeat.

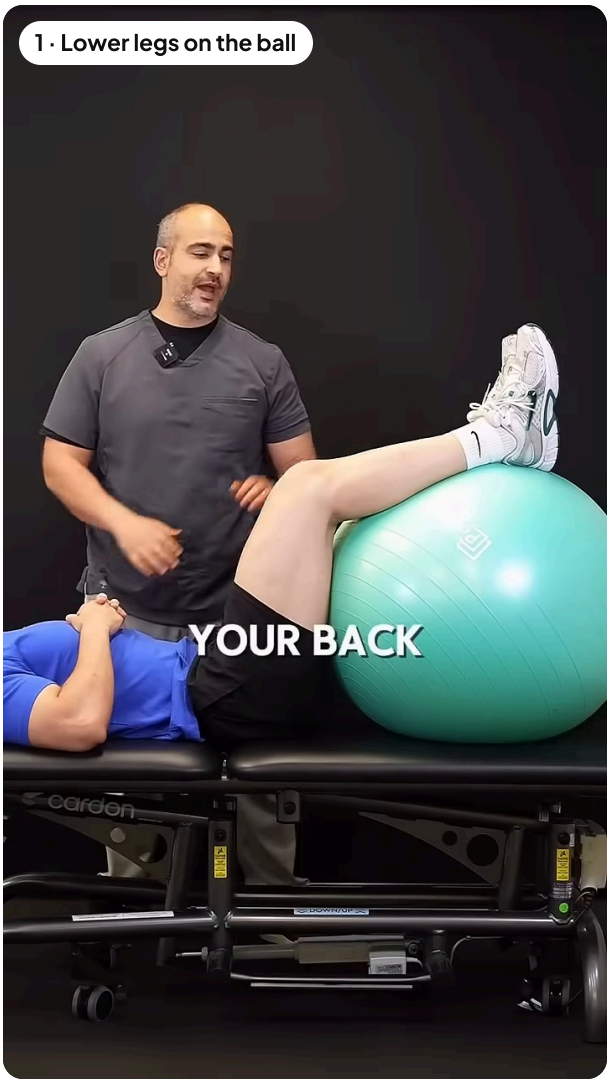
3 sets of 10–15 reps, slow and controlled

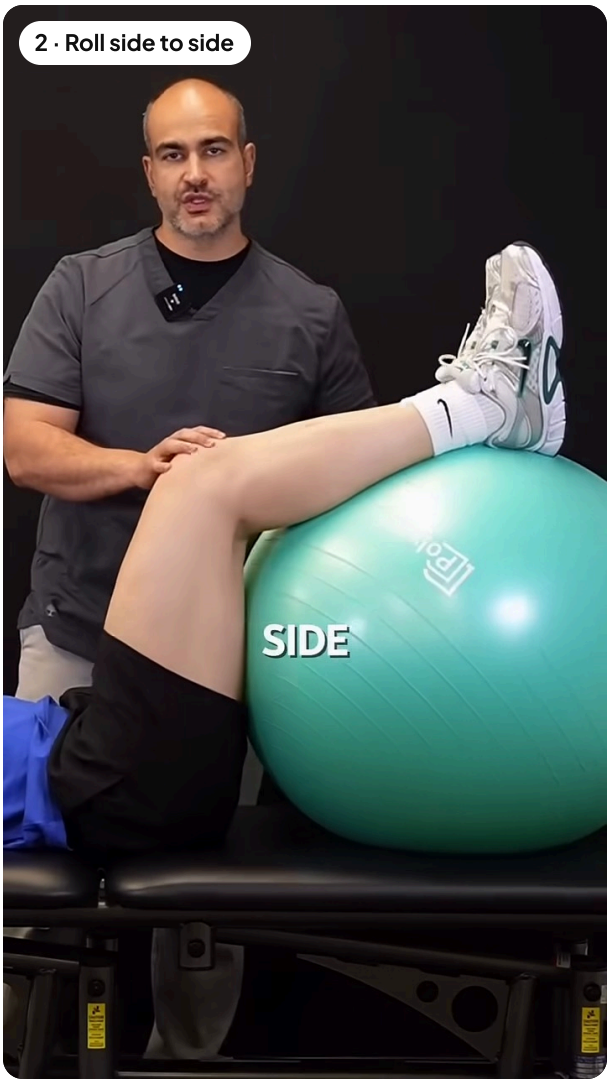
From Armin's video description

Stop if pain, numbness or tingling travels **farther down your leg**, or pain goes above about 4/10 or keeps building.

2 Ball side-to-side rotation

Gently moves the lumbar joints and increases blood flow





1. **Lie on your back** and **rest your lower legs on a ball** like so.
2. **Gently go side to side**, creating some rotation around the lumbar spine.
3. This increases blood flow and joint movement. Keep going and repeat.

3 sets of 10–15 reps, slow and controlled

From Armin's video description

Stop if pain, numbness or tingling travels **farther down your leg**, or pain goes above about 4/10 or keeps building.

3 Supported leg extension

Strengthens your back extensors without irritating the joints





1. **Lean forward onto something** for support.
2. **Gently round out the back** from here.
3. **Straighten out one leg** just like so, coming to just neutral.
4. **Go right back in** and repeat. This strengthens your extensors but doesn't irritate the joint.

3 sets of 10–15 reps, slow and controlled

From Armin's video description

Stop if pain, numbness or tingling travels **farther down your leg**, or pain goes above about 4/10 or keeps building.

DAILY ROUTINE · ABOUT 10 MINUTES

Put it together

01
Open up
Ball knees-to-chest, 3 × 10–15

02
Mobilize
Ball side-to-side rotation, 3 × 10–15

03
Strengthen
Supported leg extension, 3 × 10–15 each leg

Sets and reps are from Armin's video description; doing it once a day is a suggestion. Focus on comfortable mobility and strengthening and build up gradually. Suggested: mild discomfort up to about **4/10** is OK. Don't push through significant pain.

Stop the exercise if you notice

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

Avoid pushing through exercises that significantly increase your leg symptoms (from Armin's description).

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

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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Scan for @arminphysio

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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