

Sweetwater Pain & Spine

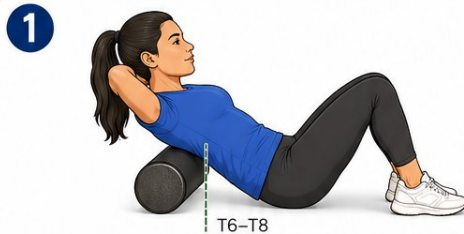
Home Exercise Handout

Thoracic Pain

Thoracic pain (mid-back pain) most often results from postural strain, prolonged sitting, and stiffness in the thoracic spine and surrounding muscles. Forward head posture, rounded shoulders, and sedentary habits place chronic load on the thoracic vertebrae, discs, facet joints, and supporting soft tissues. These exercises target the primary contributors to mid-back pain — thoracic mobility, postural muscle activation, and chest flexibility — and are most effective when performed consistently as part of your daily routine.

1 Thoracic Extension over Foam Roller

30–60 sec per position • 1–2 repetitions • 1–2x daily



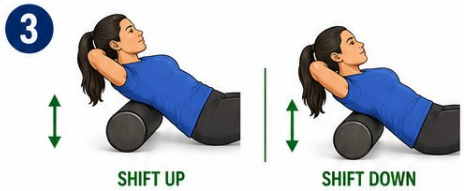
SET UP

Place a foam roller perpendicular to your spine at the mid-back (T6–T8). Recline back with hands interlaced behind the neck. Keep feet flat and knees bent for stability and comfort.



EXTEND

Let gravity extend the thoracic spine over the roller. Open your chest and relax. Breathe slowly and deeply. Hold this position for **30–60 seconds**.



ADJUST

Shift slightly up or down to target adjacent thoracic levels. Focus on the area that feels the tightest. Do not roll the lumbar spine or neck.



REPEAT

Breathe slowly for 30–60 seconds per position. Repeat 1–2 times. **This is the single most effective thoracic mobility exercise.** Mild popping in the mid-back is normal.

2 Seated Thoracic Rotation

10 reps each side • Pause 2 sec • Daily



SET UP

Sit on the edge of a chair with feet flat. Cross your arms over your chest or place hands behind your head with elbows wide.



ROTATE

Keeping your hips still and facing forward, rotate your upper body as far as comfortable to one side. The movement comes from the thoracic spine — not the neck or hips.



PAUSE

Pause for 2 seconds at end range. Keep the movement smooth, controlled, and comfortable.



ROTATE OTHER SIDE

Return to center, then rotate to the opposite side. Perform smoothly and rhythmically for the prescribed repetitions.

3 Prone Y-T-W (Scapular & Thoracic Activation)

3 x 10 reps each position • Hold 3 sec at top • Daily



Y RAISE (Y SHAPE)

Lie face down, forehead on a small towel, thumbs pointing up.
Raise your arms diagonally at 45° to form a “Y” shape.
Squeeze your shoulder blades down and in.
Hold 3 seconds at the top, then lower.



T RAISE (T SHAPE)

Raise your arms straight out to the sides at shoulder height to form a “T” shape.
Squeeze your shoulder blades down and in.
Hold 3 seconds at the top, then lower.



W RAISE (W SHAPE)

Bend your elbows to 90°.
Raise your upper arms to shoulder height, forming a “W” shape.
Squeeze your shoulder blades down and in.
Hold 3 seconds at the top, then lower.



REPEAT

Perform 3 sets of 10 reps for each position (Y, T, W).
Hold 3 seconds at the top of each rep.
Move slowly and with control.
Focus on quality over speed.



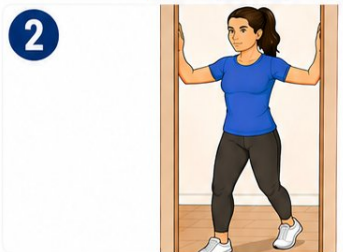
4 Doorway Pectoral Stretch

3 reps • Hold 30 sec • Daily



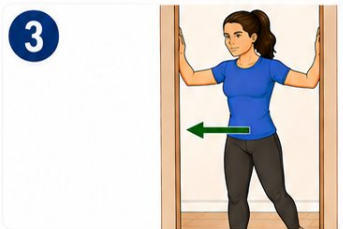
SET UP

Stand in a doorway with both forearms on the frame.
Elbows at 90° at shoulder height.



STANCE

Stagger your feet slightly for balance.
Keep your core lightly engaged.



STRETCH

Lean body weight gently forward through the doorway — feel the stretch across the front of both shoulders and chest.



POSTURE CHECK

Keep your chin tucked and avoid shrugging your shoulders.
Hold for **30 seconds**.
Repeat for **3 reps**.

■ Stop any exercise that causes sharp pain, new numbness or weakness, or worsening of symptoms, and contact our office. These exercises supplement but do not replace your provider's individualized plan.

Questions or concerns? Call Sweetwater Pain & Spine: (775) 870-1480

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