

Back Extension

45-degree Roman chair / bodyweight hip hinge

Hinge at the hips and return using the buttocks and backs of the thighs. Keep a natural, neutral spine and stop when the trunk and legs form one line.



Start / top: head, trunk and legs aligned

Main target: erector spinae

The spinal erectors work mainly isometrically to help hold the trunk and maintain a neutral spine. Avoid deliberately bending and arching the lower back.

Supporting muscles: glutes and hamstrings

In this hip-hinge version, the gluteus maximus and hamstrings provide the main hip-extension movement that brings the trunk back up. The abdominals also assist trunk stability.

What makes it useful

The bench supports the feet and upper thighs while the posterior muscles work together. Focus on posture and control, rather than lifting the trunk as high as possible.

Pad and foot placement

Set the pad against the upper thighs, below the hip crease, so the hips can hinge without the abdomen being compressed. Plant both feet on the footplate and secure the ankles with the rollers. Cross the arms over the chest.

Train both a steady spine and controlled movement at the hips.

Movement and technique

Back Extension



Lowering: hinge at the hips with a neutral spine

1 Set a steady starting position

Check the foot and pad support. Align the head, trunk and legs, with the neck in line with the spine.

2 Hinge down slowly

Fold at the hips without rounding the lower back. Lower only as far as you can maintain the neutral-spine position.

3 Return with the hips

Use the glutes and hamstrings to extend the hips and raise the trunk smoothly. Avoid swinging or bouncing.

4 Stop at one straight line

Stop when the head, trunk and legs are aligned. Do not arch beyond that line; repeat along the same controlled path.

Form checks

- Keep the feet secured, upper thighs supported and arms crossed. Maintain a natural neck and light abdominal tension.

- Keep breathing and control both directions. Reduce the range before the posture starts to change.

Stop if the lower back or hips become painful. Steady yourself before getting off the bench.

References

1. Luke Johnson: 45 Degree Back Extension Tutorial
2. Physitrack: Back Extension (Erector Spinae)
3. Schellenberg et al. (2017): back-extension mechanics