

Back Exercises.



Spinal Arch.

1. Stand with feet hip width apart, weight evenly distributed onto feet, knees slightly bent, pelvis in neutral and arms hanging loosely at your side.
2. *Very slowly* bend forward imagining that you are moving one vertebra at a time. Start with the head until the chin touches, then move onto the shoulders, middle of the back then lower back. Bend as far as you comfortably can
3. Just allow yourself to hang loosely from the hips, and gently sway from side to side (with a slight up-and-down movement). Hold for about 1 minute.
4. *Very slowly* uncurl yourself back into the upright position. Bend your knees slightly to take the strain off the low back muscles.
5. Repeat process 5 - 7 times. Each time going a bit further forward than the last.

Finish exercise by reaching up and backward hand slightly - stretching the front of the body.



Seated Spinal Twist.

1. Seated on floor with left leg tucked beside right buttock. Right foot is placed either on the right side or the left side (depending on your flexibility) of the bent left knee.
2. Reach over with the left hand (rotate toward the right) and place forearm alongside the outside of right thigh. Right palm is placed on the floor behind you.
3. Ensure you have a straight spine.
4. Inhale, exhale and slowly turn your trunk towards the hand placed behind you (towards the right). Hold for 2 - 3 breaths. Make sure you do not strain your head during the turn.
5. Return to start position and repeat 5 - 1- times.
6. Now do the opposite to stretch the left side of the low back.



Spine Side Bend.

1. Stand with feet hip width apart, weight evenly distributed onto feet, knees slightly bent, pelvis in neutral and arms hanging loosely at your side.
2. Inhale and as you breathe out, slowly slide your hand down your leg.
3. Inhale and return to starting position.
4. Repeat same to other side.
5. Do 10 each side.
6. Make sure you do not lean forward and keep your body in line as you bend sideways.

To enhance stretch, bring opposite arm over head in direction of side bend.

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Spine Side Bend Lying Position.

1. Lie on the floor in the sit up position.
2. Make sure pelvis is in neutral (to do this, form a triangle with hands between navel and pubic bone, tilt pelvis until triangle is level)
3. Inhale and as you breathe out, lift your shoulder blades off the floor and slowly slide your right hand down towards your right ankle
4. Inhale and return to starting position.
5. Repeat same to other side.
6. Do 10 each side.
7. Make sure you do not lean forward and keep your body in line as you bend sideways.



Ribcage Twist.

1. Position yourself on the floor on your hands, and knees. The spine is in neutral (halfway from being tilted forward and way back).
2. Inhale then exhale and slide right hand through along floor towards left armpit (you should feel your upper body rotate towards the left). Be sure you turn your head in the direction of your upper body.
3. Hold for 10 - 15 seconds (continue breathing)
4. Inhale and return to starting position.
5. Repeat same side 3 - 5 times.
6. Now repeat to the other side.

To enhance stretch, bring opposite arm over head in direction of side bend.



Spinal Flexion / Extension (Cat Yoga Pose).

1. Position yourself on the floor on your hands, and knees. The spine is in neutral (halfway from being tilted forward and way back). Strong through the shoulders - don't let them drop.
2. Inhale and *slowly* Bring your head up and backward; then imagine moving one vertebra at a time (beginning with neck and working down to coccyx) and let spine curve into concave shape.
3. Now reverse movement starting with head and arch your back into a convex shape.
4. Take 30-60 sec to move between poses taking 30 - 60 sec.
5. Exhale and slowly return to the starting position. Do not go further than neutral pelvis.

Remain strong across the shoulders throughout this exercise.

Back Exercises.



The Plank.

1. Position yourself on the floor on your elbows and lower body on the floor.
2. Inhale stabilise pelvis into neutral and *slowly* draw your stomach up and raise body off the floor onto balls of feet.
3. Hold this position 15 - 30 seconds - don't forget to breathe.
4. Make sure the body is in a straight line and your upper body is over your elbows. Again maintain strong position across shoulders ie. Do not let them sag.
5. Visualise contraction of all the stomach muscles in this position.
6. Return to the floor.

Aim to gradually increase time in 'plank' position.



The Sideways Plank.

1. Position yourself on the floor on your right elbow and lower body on the floor.
2. Inhale stabilise pelvis into neutral and *slowly* draw your stomach up and raise body off the floor onto left foot.
3. Hold this position 15 - 30 seconds - don't forget to breathe.
4. Make sure the body is in a straight line and your upper body is over your elbow. Again maintain strong position across shoulders ie. Do not let them sag.
5. Visualise contraction of all the stomach muscles in this position.
6. Return to the floor and repeat to other side.



Rotation Low Back (Acute Back).

1. Lie on back with your legs bent together and feet flat on the floor. Arms are out to the side 90° from body.
2. Visualise any tension in the low back and breathe into relaxing that part.
3. Stabilise pelvis into neutral.
4. Exhale and slowly drop the knees to the right while the head looks towards the opposite side.
5. Repeat the same but to the other side working about 10 times each side
6. This exercise can also be done with top leg straight

Note: Can place a hot towel under back to increase circulation.



Knee Hugs (Acute Low Back Pain).

1. Lie on back with your legs bent together and feet flat on the floor.
2. Visualise any tension in the low back and breathe into relaxing that part.
3. Slowly pull knees toward chest as you comfortably can.
4. Remain in this position for 1 - 2 minutes.

Back Exercises.



Knee Hugs Variation (Acute Low Back Pain).

1. Lie on back with your legs bent together and feet flat on the floor.
2. Visualise any tension in the low back and breathe into relaxing that part.
3. Slowly pull one knee up towards chest, leaving other foot on floor.
4. Hold raised knee with both hands, move it in as large rotation is comfortable.
5. Make sure the leg is not working during this motion - allow it to be passively moved by your hands
6. Rotate clockwise and counterclockwise at least 20 times in each direction.
7. Repeat using other leg.



Knee Hugs Variation (Acute Low Back Pain).

1. Pull both knees to chest and rotate them counterclockwise and clockwise.
2. Separate them holding one in each hand and move one clockwise, the other counterclockwise 10 times one way, 10 times the other.
3. Loosely hold knees and roll slowly from side to side.
4. As you roll onto your side, extend both legs out so they form a right angle to your torso
5. Repeat both side 10 times.



Rotation Stretch for Low Back and Pelvis

1. Lie on back with knees up, feet flat on the floor.
2. Lift right leg and rest it on the left.
3. Let right leg relax (with foot hanging loosely) and be completely supported by the left leg.
4. Lower knees to right, making sure right leg remains relaxed (left leg does all the support work)
5. Now bring knees up to the left side and notice the right leg doing all the support work.
6. Repeat 10 times each side.
7. Always turn the head in the opposite side to where the knees are going.

Note: exercise will stretch and strengthen thighs and also teach you to tense and relax certain muscle groups.

