

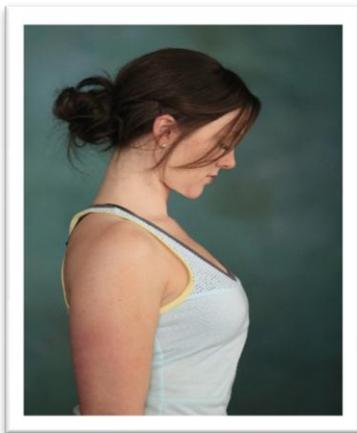
Perform stretches as often as you like. Recommended minimum frequency is 2-3x/day 15-30 sec
Always hold a stretch for at least 15 seconds. Stretch until a light to moderate tension is felt in the stretched muscle. Muscles that are worked should be stretched after the work is done or during a resting period. It is a good idea to practice stretching the larger muscle groups of the body every day. Areas to focus on are postural muscles (stretches given below), hips, legs, chest, shoulders and arms.

Note: It is possible to overstretch and irritate a muscle if stretched with too much force or for too long. Stop any exercise that causes pain.

Neck Stretches

1.) Chin Tuck or neck flexion

Tuck chin in. Roll head forwards. Lift back of head to feel gentle stretch down the back of your Neck.



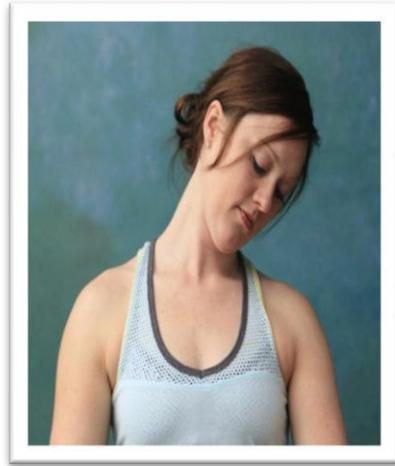
2.) Neck Extension

Tilt head backwards slowly. Lift chin to feel gentle stretch in front of your neck or throat. Stop the stretch immediately if you get dizzy or experience blurred vision.



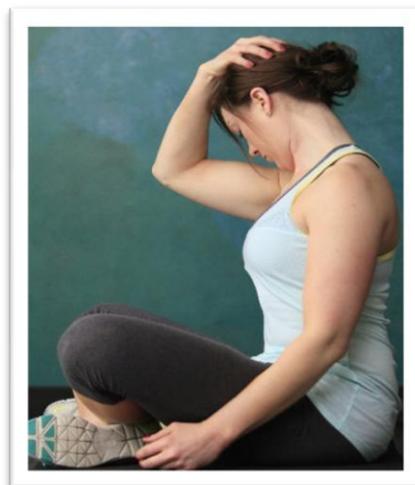
3.) Neck side flexion

Keep your face or nose pointed forward. Tilt head bringing your ear toward the shoulder.
Relax the opposite shoulder down to open space between the head and opposite shoulder.
Feel gentle stretch and lengthening muscles on the side of the neck.
Repeat on both sides



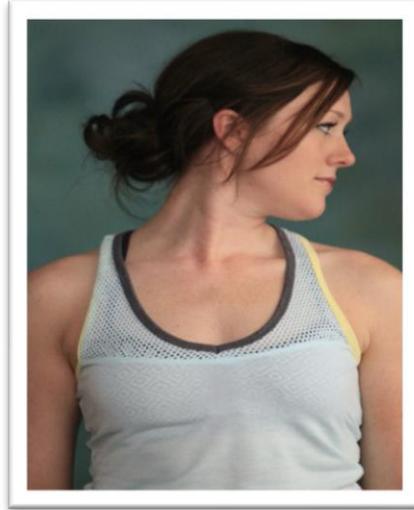
4.) Upper Shoulder/ lower neck stretch

Sit up tall. Relax both shoulders back and down. Turn head to the right 45 degrees. Tilt head down and tuck chin in. You should feel a gentle stretch in the lower neck/upper shoulder on the side the head is turned away from (left side). You may add stretch by pulling the head even further same direction. Place the right hand on back and top of the head) to increase stretch.
Repeat left side



5.) Neck rotation

Turn your head slowly to the right side as if to look over your right shoulder.
Find a comfortable stopping place where you feel a gentle stretch.
Repeat to the other side. Make sure to keep your shoulder and back relaxed.



Mid to upper back stretches

1.) Child's pose

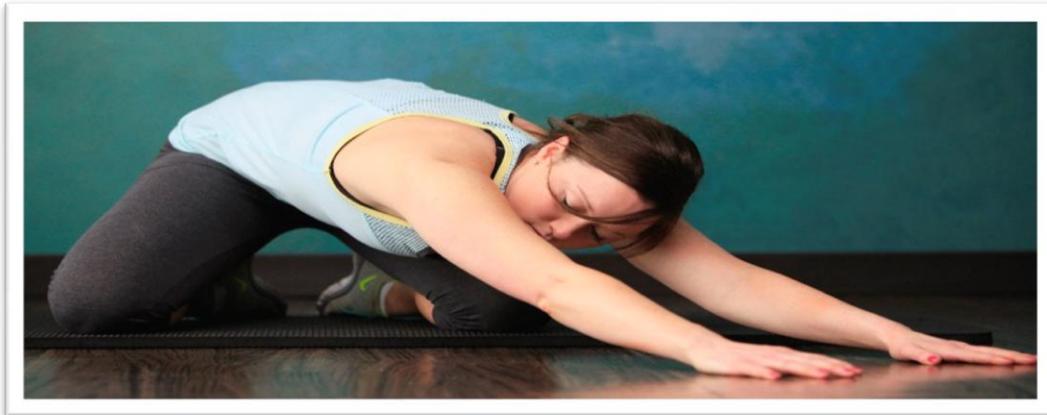
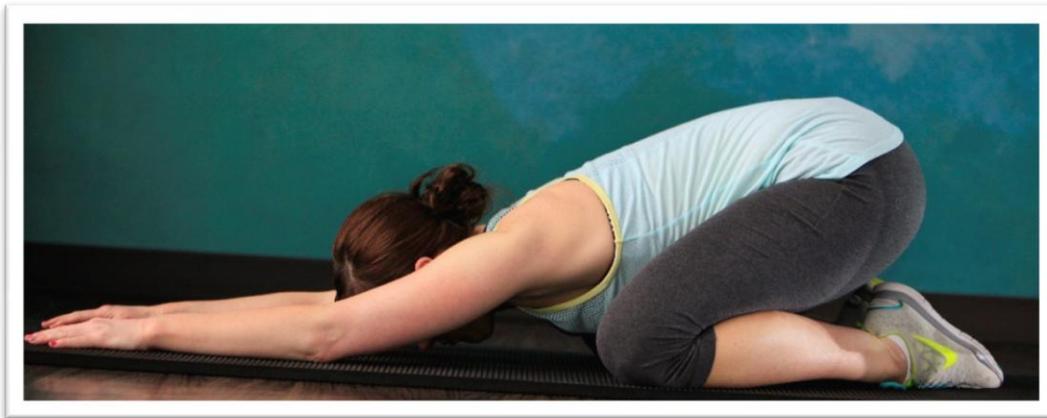
Kneeling on the floor. Sit the hips backward over the ankles. Lean body forward and reach straight above head with arms shoulder distance apart.

Stretch through the finger tips.

30 seconds forward

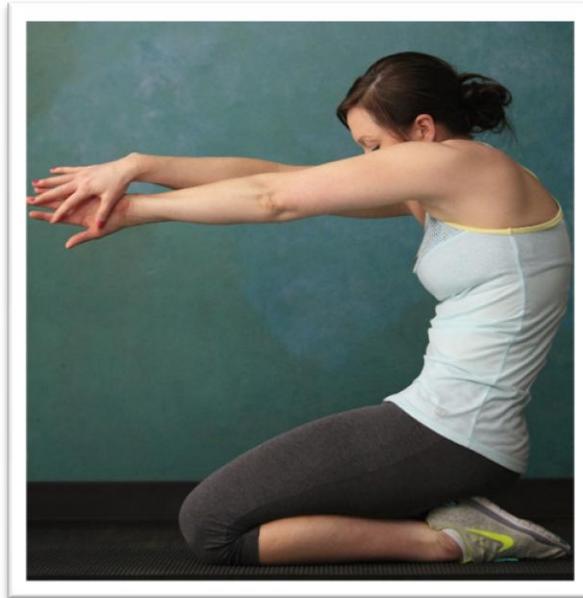
30 seconds reaching 45 degrees to the right

30 seconds reaching 45 degrees to the left.



2.) Upper back stretch

Standing or seated. Reach forward at chest level with both arms and clasp hands together. Round the mid to upper back while creating a C shape with upper body. Feel gentle stretch between shoulder blades or mid to upper back. Hold 30 seconds.



3.) Thoracic rotational exercise

Sit up tall and open chest. Raise elbows wide and half way to shoulder level. Rotate side to side several times. Feel gentle stretch and mobility in mid to upper back.

After several continuous rotations to both sides, rotate and hold to one side. Reach the opposite arm across your body to hold onto a door frame or pole (or any anchor). Once anchored, then pull away from anchor as if to rotate to the other side. Feel stretch on one side of rib cage and mid back and possibly upper shoulder.

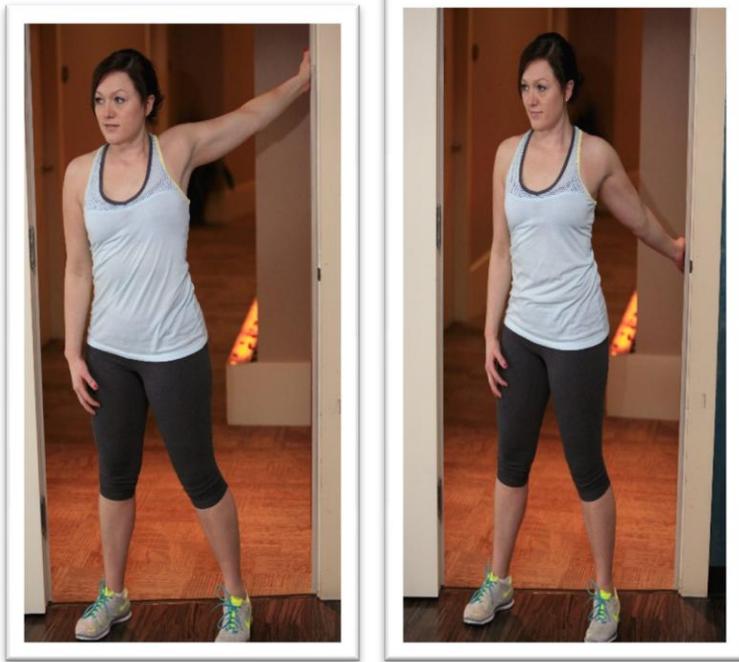
30 seconds each side



4.) Pectoral stretch

Stand inside of a doorway. Lift arm straight to the side. Bend elbow 90 degrees and lean forearm against the door frame and lean forward while opening chest. Feel stretch across upper arm, front of shoulder, and into the chest. Both sides may be done at same time using both sides of door frame





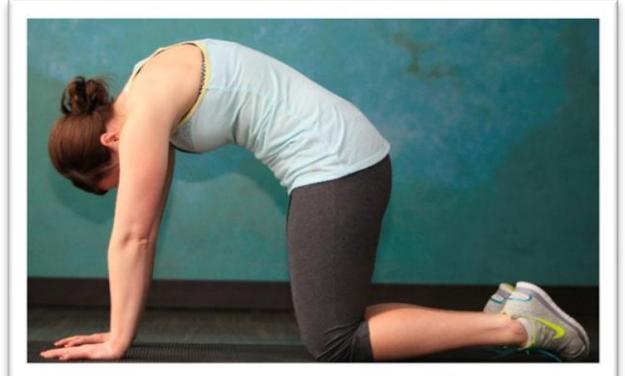
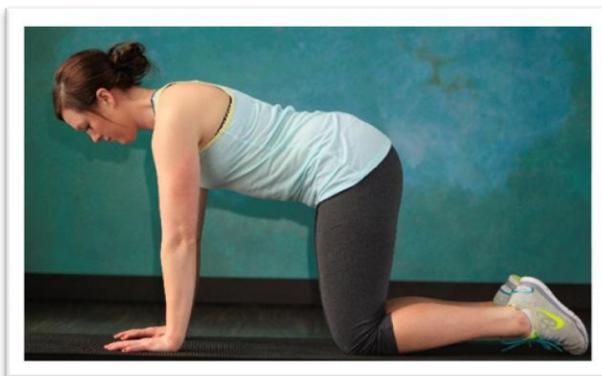
Mid to lower back stretches

1.) Cat/ Cow

Starting on floor on hands and knees (as if a cat or cow) in neutral position. Breathe in deeply as you arch your back upwards (like a cat). Push shoulder blades apart at top of arching back.

Exhale while dropping belly towards the floor (like a cow).

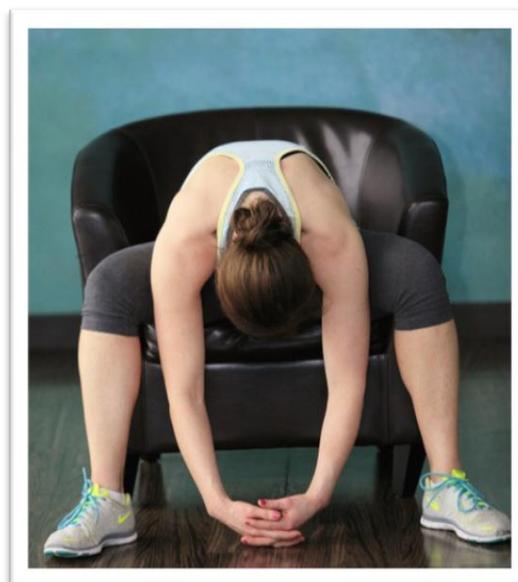
Repeat inhale (cat) and exhale (cow) position 5 times.



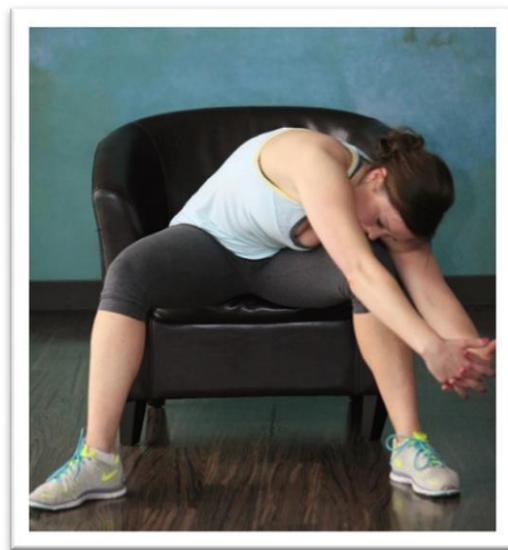
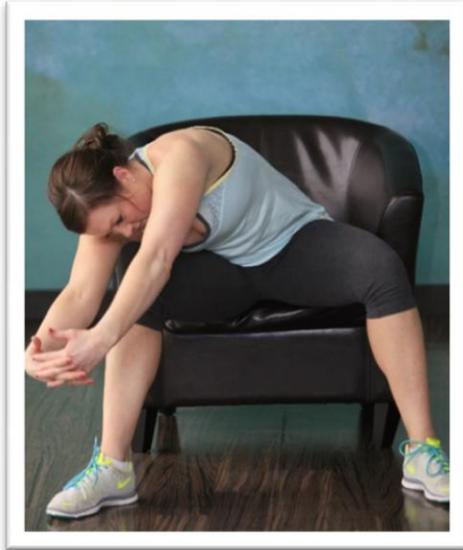


2.) Lower back flexion

In seated position, open knees to lean forward through middle of knees. Let the arms and hands hang. Feel gentle stretch over the spine and lower back. Hold 30 seconds



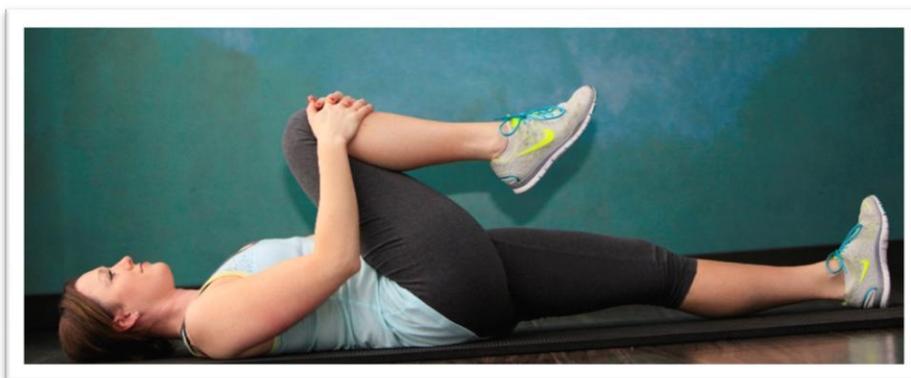
Reach arms over one knee and tilt body 30 degrees towards opposite knee. Hold 30 seconds
And repeat on opposite side. You should feel the stretch along the side of the rib cage between arm pit and hip.



3.) Supine back stretch

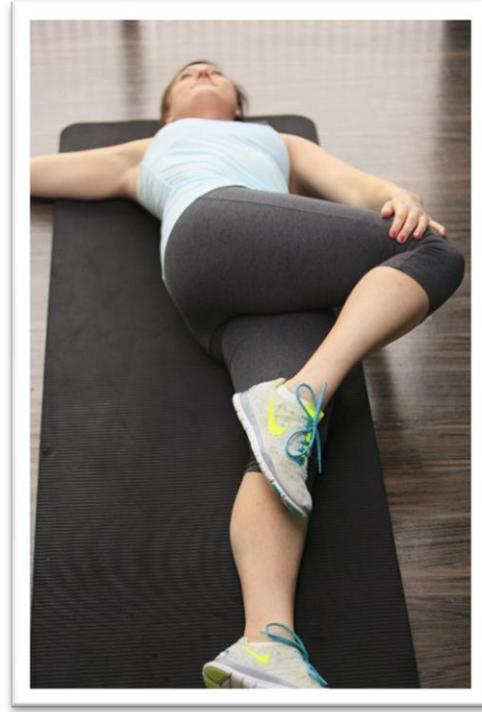
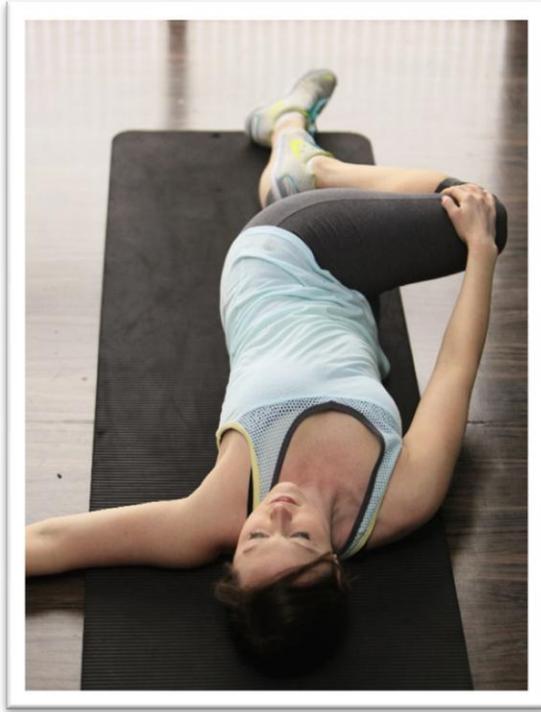
Lay flat on the floor on your back. Bend one knee as you bring it to the chest. Hold the knee in the stretch, 30 seconds. Stop the stretch if you feel any groin pain.

Repeat with other knee, 30 seconds. Repeat both knees 30 seconds.



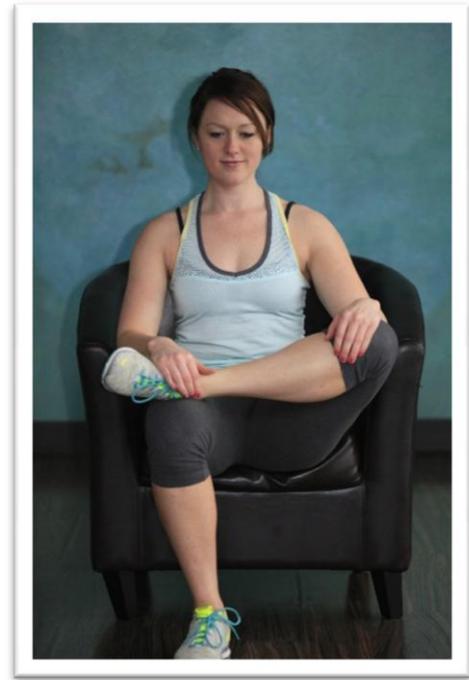
4.) Supine lumbar twist stretch

Lay flat on the floor on your back. Bend one knee 90 degrees and cross that leg over the other leg by twisting at the hips and spine. Keep opposite arm outstretched. Hold 30 sec
Perform on both sides.



5.) Hip and glute stretch

Sit down on the floor or in a chair. Cross the right ankle over the left knee and let the right knee rest outwards. To increase the stretch you may use your hand to push the right knee down or sit tall with lower back arched. You should feel tension or stretch on the outside of the right hip/ glute. Hold 30 seconds.
Repeat with the left side



Inner Corset:

It is necessary and important to engage the inner corset muscles during all activities including supporting healthy posture. These muscles include the intrinsic back muscles, oblique abdominals, and the transverse abdominals. Specific activities that challenge the spine and discs are: carrying heavy loads, running or jogging, and carrying heavy loads on the head.

Written by Dr. Traci Grandfield, Doctor of Chiropractic
Photography by Bill Bankson, Division 1 Studio

To engage these muscles the spine must be stacked properly in correct posture.

- Elongate the spine as you sit up tall.
- Chest is lifted
- Shoulders are resting in neutral (not rolled forward or hyper extended but slightly sitting behind the torso).
- The head is centered over the shoulders (instead of leaning forward or behind shoulders).
- The ear is in line with the gleno-humeral joint, femoral head, knee, and ankle.
- The pelvis is neutral (without too much tilt forward or backward- engaging the rectus abdominus is necessary to hold this posture).

**When carrying heavy loads on the head it is a good idea to periodically take a moment to lift the load above the head with outstretched arms. This action stretches the back muscles and re-engages the inner corset.



Full spine stretch: without a load reach the arms upward and a little forward to lengthen the back. You may start with one hand/arm at a time then both arms.

Leg stretches

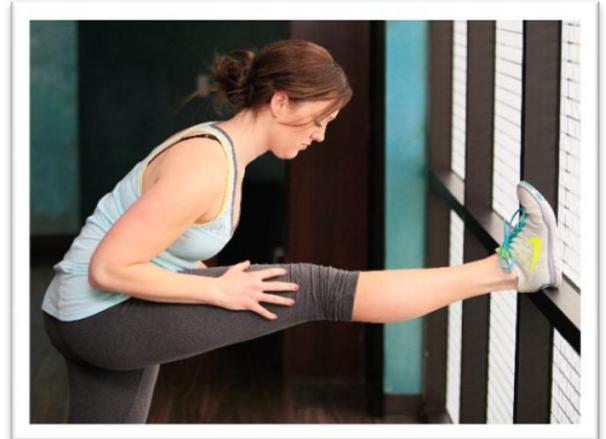
Stretching the supportive large muscles of the lower extremities will promote knee, hip, and back health. Stretch both sides equally and for at least 15 seconds.

1. Quadriceps (front of the thigh): Bend on knee to bring the foot to the hand on the same side. Keep hips level and pull tension into the thigh while pulling the foot towards the buttocks. If unsteady then hold onto something for support with the opposite hand.



2. Hamstrings (back of thigh): Standing or kneeling, extend one leg forward with foot in flexed position. You may rest the heel on the floor or a higher level of support in front of you. Reach forward toward the toes on the

extended leg. Keep lower back straight as you bend at the hip. Go as far as feels comfortable. The stretch should be felt in the back of the thigh and may be felt all the way into the lower back.



3. Calves (back of lower leg): bring one foot forward for support as you lean forward toward a wall or post. Extend the leg to be stretched straight behind the body. Push through the heel to feel a stretch in the back of the lower leg. Hold 15 seconds and then let the knee slightly unlock. Continue to push through the heel to feel a secondary area in the back of the lower leg stretch.

