

9 LOW BACK STRETCHES

to INCREASE MOBILITY and REDUCE PAIN

CAUTION: If this or any other stretch/exercise causes **pain, tingling, numbness or other abnormality, immediately discontinue** and contact our office as soon as possible. The stretches should be comfortable and always use slow controlled movements with the exercises. These will typically be performed three times per week unless instructed otherwise.



Hug Knees to Chest

Lie down on your back and pull both knees up to your chest. Hold your arms under the knees, not over (that would put too much pressure on your knee joints). Slowly pull the knees toward your shoulders.

Hold Time: 15 seconds
Repeat: 3 times



Modified Butterfly Stretch

Sit up straight while balancing on your sit bones. Touch the soles of your feet together with your feet six to eight inches in front of your hips. (Don't pull your feet in too close and make it tough on the knees.) Instead of pushing down on the thigh simply incline your chest forward until you feel a gradual and comfortable pull in the lower back.

Hold Time: 15 seconds
Repeat: 3 times



Seated Lower-Back Stretch (alternative to Modified Butterfly)

You can either sit in a chair or on a bench for this stretch. Have your feet flat on the floor, legs about hip-distance apart. Place your hands on your knees and slowly incline your body forward until your head and upper back hang forward between your legs.

Hold Time: 15 seconds
Repeat: 3 times



Knee Across the Body

Lie down on the floor with your right leg straight. Bend your left leg and lower it across your body, holding the knee down toward the floor with your right hand. (The knee doesn't need to touch the floor if you're tight.) Place your left arm comfortably beside you and turn your head to the left. Imagine you have a weight tied to your tailbone. Let your tailbone fall back toward the floor as your chest reaches in the opposite direction to stretch your lower back. Switch sides.

Hold Time: 15 seconds

Repeat: 3 times



Seated Floor Twist (Sitting Piriformis Stretch)

Sit up straight, balanced on your sit bones. Keep your spine straight. Straighten your left leg, and then cross your right leg over the left (put the right foot on the floor, outside the left knee). Turn your torso to the right, "hooking" the outside of your right knee with your left elbow. Put your right hand on the floor behind you for balance as you twist. Switch sides.

Hold Time: 15 seconds

Repeat: 3 times



Seated Floor Hamstring Stretch

Sit on a mat with your right leg extended in front of you and your left leg bent with your foot against your right inner thigh. Lean forward from your hips and reach for your ankle until you feel a stretch in your hamstring. Repeat for your other side.

Hold Time: 15 seconds

Repeat: 3 times



Seated Hamstring Stretch (alternative to Floor Stretch)

Sit down on the outer edge of a chair or bench and put one foot on the floor (the knee should be bent at a 90-degree angle). Extend your other leg in front of you (slightly bent or straight) with the toes flexed toward the ceiling. Place your hands on the thigh of your bent leg and incline forward with a "flat" back. Switch sides.

Hold Time: 15 seconds

Repeat: 3 times



Standing Bench-Assisted Quad Stretch

Start by standing with your back about two to three feet away from a bench or even the arm of a couch. Lift one leg behind you and rest your foot on the bench. Squat down while leaning back on the supported leg until you feel a comfortable stretch on the front muscle of the leg. Switch sides.

Hold Time: 15 seconds

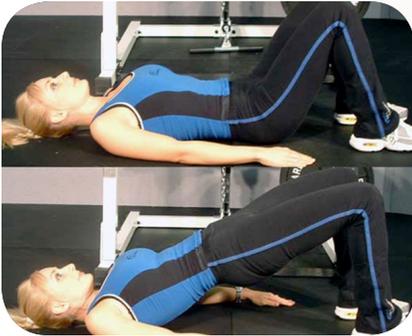
Repeat: 3 times



Standing Quad Stretch (alternative to Bench-Assisted Stretch)

Use a wall or table for support and balance while performing this stretch. Grab the leg you are stretching with your hand and pull the heel as close to your buttock as possible or until you feel a comfortable stretch. Even though this is a more popular stretch than the Bench Assisted Stretch, I use this as an alternate because of the tendency for most people to rotate the lower spine when grabbing the leg. Switch sides.

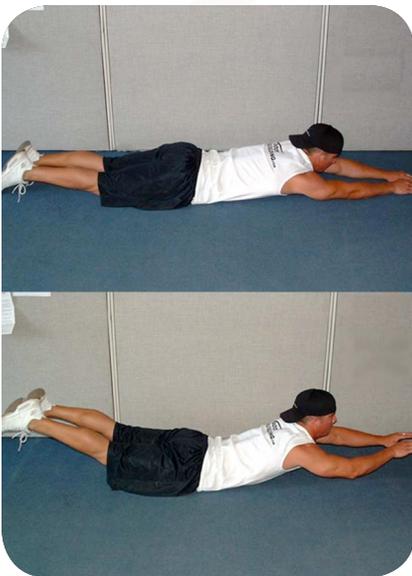
Hold Time: 15 seconds
Repeat: 3 times



Butt Lift (Bridge)

Lying on your back with your knees bent; lift your hips off the floor while keeping your back straight. Do not try to arch your back too high and risk an injury!

Hold Time: 15 seconds
Repeat: 3 times



Superman

Lie face down on the floor with your arm stretched out directly overhead (like Superman flying, hence the name). Raise your arms, chest and legs off the floor and hold it there for 5 seconds. Relax to position one and repeat. You can also do these one arm and leg at a time as follows: Raise your left arm and right leg into the air at the same time, also raising your chest slightly off the floor. Hold there for 5 seconds as well. Lower your limbs back to the ground then raise your right arm and left leg and hold for 5 seconds. You can push down with the hand that is on the ground to help raise your other arm and chest higher off the ground. This exercise, even though it only uses your limbs as resistance, provides an excellent way to strengthen the lower back muscles.

Hold Time: 15 seconds
Repeat: 6 times



Kickback

While on the floor on all fours, extend one leg upward. Keep the lower part of the leg at a 45° angle. There is no need to extend the leg beyond parallel with the floor. You are not a ballerina and you have no business trying to touch the back of your head with your foot. Hold this for 5 seconds. These movements need to be slow and controlled.

Hold Time: 15 seconds
Repeat: 6 times

The exercises/stretches contained within this instruction sheet are solely for the use of existing, active patients of our clinic who have received a prescription for these exercises/stretches. Other individuals do not have our permission to perform the exercises/stretches contained within. Attempting to perform these exercises/stretches, unless explicitly prescribed by our office, could result in serious injury or a worsening of existing conditions.