

SPINAL FLEXIBILITY & STRETCHING EXERCISES

Helps to build strong muscles to support your neck and back. **STRETCHING EXERCISES** increase flexibility and movement of the joints of the body and spine. Do exercises 5 to 10 times, 3 times a week, and don't do any that cause pain.

LYING



Bend knees, lie on back, take a deep breath, place your hands on your thighs and relax.



Tighten your abdomen and buttocks. Press your lower back onto the floor. **ACTION** – Stretches and strengthens stomach and back muscles.



Turn both knees to one side while rotating your head to the opposite side. **ACTION** – stretches lower back, mid back, muscles, and joints.



Pull both knees to your chest. **ACTION** – stretches lower back, buttocks and abdominal muscles.



Slowly raise hips upward. Keep a straight line from the knees to the shoulders. Do not arch your back. **ACTION** – stretches buttocks and stretches upper leg muscles.



Cross your arms, tuck your chin in, tighten abdomen, and curl halfway up. Use hands behind head for support only. (Do not pull). **ACTION** – strengthens abdominal muscles.

LYING



Lie on your back with one leg bent and the foot flat on the floor. Extend the opposite leg straight out. Relax and allow your back to feel the floor.



With knee bent, pull it to your chest, keeping the opposite leg straight, press your knee and lower back to the floor. **ACTION** – buttocks muscles, back muscles and stretches hip.



Press your lower back against the floor, raise the straight leg until it is level with the bent knee. **ACTION** – strengthens and stretches quadriceps muscles, hamstring muscles and stretches hip joints.

PRONE



Lie on your stomach, raise one leg off the floor, while keeping the knee straight. **ACTION** – strengthens lower back, abdominal and leg muscles, stretches hamstrings and quadriceps.



Keep your neck in a normal position, push yourself up on your forearms. Keep hips and abdomen against floor. **ACTION** – strengthens posterior back muscles, attains normal low back curve.

HANDS & KNEES



While on your hands and knees, keep your knees directly under your hips, your hands under your shoulders, keep your neck relaxed and in its normal position, that is, with your ears in line with your shoulders.



Drop your head down and press your back upwards by tightening your abdominal and buttocks muscles. **ACTION** – to strengthen abdominal and buttocks muscles and to stretch your lower and mid back.



Relax your stomach and buttocks muscles and allow your back to sag. Do not sit back on your hips. **ACTION** – to stretch back and abdominal muscles and help maintain lower back curve.



Stretch one arm straight out in front of you while maintaining your back and head position while keeping support arm straight. **ACTION** – strengthens and stretches your shoulder, upper back muscles and joints.



Extend your straight leg behind you while holding it parallel to the floor. Maintain your normal back and neck position. **ACTION** – strengthens buttocks, abdomen and leg muscles.

NECK FLEX



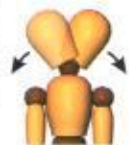
Drop head forward, slowly. You will feel the stretch of your neck muscles.

Slowly drop head backward and you will feel the stretch of your front neck muscles.



Slowly turn your head from side to side. Feel the stretch of the muscles on the side of your neck. Do not strain.

Tilt your head to one side. This is to stretch the muscles on the side of your neck.



NECK STRENGTH



Press forehead to palm. Resist forward motion.

Clasp hands behind head, press your head back, resist motion.



Turn head to one side, resist side motion with your hand.

Tilt head to other side, resist motion with hand.

