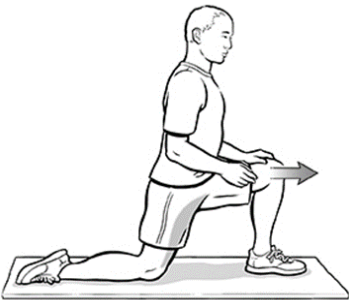


Stretching

Below are stretches to help target commonly tight muscles that can attribute to back pain. The goal is to increase blood flow and elongate the muscle to allow the muscle to perform at its best.. During stretching it is important to not hold your breath and breathe deep and freely. This helps flood the muscle with oxygen and aid in relaxation. Stretches are good to perform in combination with muscle activation

Hip Flexor Stretch



1. For your starting position, begin in a kneeling position, on a padded surface for comfort.
2. Step one foot forward bending your knee to a 90-degree angle. Your upper body should be tall with your shoulders stacked over your hips.
3. Maintain this position as you slightly shift your hips forward until you feel a stretch in the front of your hip and thigh.
4. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.
5. Repeat on the other side and repeat 2 to 3 times each side.

Seated Figure 4 Stretch



1. Sit in a chair with your feet touching the ground.
2. Place one foot over the opposite knee.
3. Slowly lean the upper body forward.
 - a. Maintain a flat back as you lean forward.
 - b. To enhance the stretch, you may apply light downward pressure to the knee that is crossed.
4. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.
5. Repeat on the other side and repeat 2 to 3 times each side.

Standing Hamstring Stretch



1. Stand with one heel propped on a low table or step.
2. Keep the knee straight as shown.
3. Gently and slowly lean forward at the waist until you feel a stretch.
4. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds and keep the knee straight.
5. Repeat on the other side and repeat 2 to 3 times each side.

Child's Pose



1. Kneel on the floor and sit back on your heels with your arms at your side.
2. Slowly bend forward so your stomach touches your thighs. Try to keep your buttocks against your heels, but don't stress if that is not possible.
3. Extend your hands out in front of you with your palms down and rest them on the mat.
4. Relax your neck and let your forehead gently rest against the floor.
5. Allow your body to relax as slowly engage in deep breathing. Stay in this pose for a 4 count.
6. Slowly return to the seated position.
7. Repeat as needed.

Upper Trapezius/Neck



1. Place right arm behind the back.
2. Grasp arm with the left hand as shown.
3. Bend neck sideways to left as you pull your right arm.
4. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.
5. Repeat on the other side and repeat 2 to 3 times each side.

Levator Scapulae



1. Turn your neck and head away from the side being stretched.
2. With your opposite hand, grasp your head.
3. Flex the neck forward and look down.
4. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.
5. Repeat on the other side and repeat 2 to 3 times each side.

Shoulder Capsule



1. Gently pull your elbow across your chest with the opposite hand until a stretch is felt in the posterior shoulder area.
2. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.
3. Repeat on the other side and repeat 2 to 3 times each side.

Mid-Back Stretch



1. Interlock fingers of both hands.
2. Straighten arm in front with palms facing outward.
3. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.
4. Repeat on the other side and repeat 2 to 3 times each side.