



Take it With You™ Sheets:














Stretches and Exercises for a Healthy Low Back: Level 1 of 4

While some low back conditions are caused by factors outside of our control – genetics, accidents, etc., much of our long-term low back problems can be avoided or even eliminated through the intervention of proper stretches and exercises to strengthen and improve the flexibility of the low back, core muscles, hips, hamstrings, and even seemingly unrelated muscles, such as the chest and calf.

Warm-up Considerations: A few minutes of light movement, such as walking or stair climbing, should be performed prior to these stretches and exercises.

Special Note: Since flexibility and strength levels will vary from person to person, it may be helpful to refer to more than one of the four Low Back Take It With You Sheets; you can mix and match stretches and exercises according to your comfort level.

Stretches and Exercises: (Note: Be sure to perform both the right and left sides of each stretch/exercise.)

<p>Cat Stretch</p>  <p>Inhale here Exhale here</p>	<p>Opposite Arm/Leg Reach</p> 	<p>Seated Hamstring Stretch, using towel</p> 	<p>Supine Glute Stretch</p> 	<p>Supine Diamond</p> 	
<p>Classic Crunches Do 8-12 SLOW reps</p>  <p>Exhale here</p>	<p>Bridge</p> 	<p>Supine Hamstring Stretch, with towel</p> 	<p>Foot-on-Chair Side Stretch</p> 	<p>Chair Seated Twist</p> 	<p>Overhead Reach / "Full Body Stretch," using towel</p> 
<p>Side-lying Dancer (Front Thigh Stretch)</p> 	<p>Supine Single Knee to Chest</p> 				

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

Optimal timing/frequency: Optimal: 3-4 times a week; minimum: once a week
Helpful Hints:

- Perform only what you're familiar with and can perform with good form.
- Ease into the stretches slowly and gently, and don't forget to breathe.
- Avoid any position that causes pain or discomfort.
- For the stretches, hold the position for at least 30-40 seconds to reap the full benefit.
- Check with your doctor before beginning this or any exercise program.

