

Flexible Body ~ Flexible Mind

Low Back Stretch

Lie on your back with legs frog...heels are touching each other, arms by your side, palms down. On exhale, use the belly to bring R knee to the left, let the ankle slide to the L knee and R ear falls to the mat, R shoulder should stay connected to the mat. L hand can be placed on R knee for more stretch. Remember to breathe. Hold for 45 sec. then use ab muscles to bring leg center and return to frog. Then, same thing with the left.

Side stretch

Come to a sitting position with knees bent and both legs toward the R side of the body, side saddle position. L arm reaches to the sky and then body reaches to the R, both shoulders remain facing front, reach long through your L arm and imagine L ribs reaching toward the sky with every breathe. Take 8 full breathes and return to center on an inhale. Then, other side.

Bridge (those with low back issues might be better with no tilt, staying neutral)

On your back, feet flat on floor, knees to the sky, feet are hip distance apart and parallel. Bridge slowly, articulating through the spine, peeling one vertebrae at a time, really using the abdominals. Articulate slowly down. Repeat 3-6 times.

Hamstring Stretch

Lying supine (on your back) R leg bends in toward body, place it in a stretchy band, reach the foot to the sky, L legs reaches straight out, energy out both heels. Maintain neutral pelvis, be sure not to arch the low back. Keep hips level and breathe deeply. Then, same leg, inners stretch...let leg fall open to side of body, keeping hips pointed to the ceiling. Let L leg knee go to the side (frog style) to help keep hips level. Repeat with other side. Then bend both knees into the chest and rock the hips very slowly and in small range to each side.

Piriformis/Gluteus Stretch

Still on your back with L ankle on the opposite knee (keep foot flexed to protect the knee), be sure keep neutral pelvis with tailbone reaching toward the mat. Resist the tendency for the pubic bone to curl toward the sky. Keep the R knee in line with the shoulder and the stretching hip reaching away from the ribcage (lengthening the waistline). Breathe.

Quad Stretch

Roll onto your stomach, place hands under the forehead. Reach the R hand down by the R side to grab the R ankle and put lite pressure into the pubic bone...feel a quad stretch and breathe. Then, switch sides. After both sides, release the ankle, tiny rock of the hips side to side and push back to child's pose.

Cat

Move onto all 4's and cat back round, then exhale to extend through the spine, arching back and looking forward. Repeat 5-8 times. Then, walk the hands to the knees and use the abs to curl up to kneeling.

Hip flexor stretch

Kneeling, engage pelvic floor and bring R leg forward, foot flat on floor, knee is bent and hands are on the top of the thigh, shoulders in neutral, sliding down your back. Stay neutral through the pelvis and shift pelvis forward, be sure to keep your R knee *behind* your R toes and also be sure toes are in parallel position. If the quad is grippy, you may turn the R toes out so you are in 1st position. Keep the tailbone reaching to the floor and be mindful not to arch your low back. Also...length in the waist is a good idea...ribs reaching out of the hips. To get out of the stretch, shift your body's weight to the back leg, gently scooch your R leg closer to the body and engage pelvic floor then bring R leg back into kneeling. Then, other side.

Chest Stretch (those with Shoulder issues should eliminate or be VERY careful)

Sit with one leg crossed in front of the other, sitting on top of your sitz bones, neutral pelvis and tall through the spine. Hold a stretchy band straight out in front between both hands. Arms will remain straight in this exercise, so hold the band wide to start and you may move the hands closer and your chest opens. Wrists are straight too. Inhale, arms go up the sky and reach behind the body. Exhale, hold. Inhale to return and Exhale to hold. Repeat 5-8 times. You may hold the position of arms behind the body for a few breathes as you wish.

Rotation Stretch

Seated, R leg is bent and L leg out straight with toes to the sky. Sit tall. L arm wraps around the R leg and twist the body to the R. Look back over the R shoulder. Think about lengthening the spine and increasing the space between the lower ribcage and the hips as you take nice full breathes. Hold for 5 breathes and return center, then switch sides.

Shoulder stretch

Seated, R leg out straight and L leg bent. Reach R arm to the sky then, to grab the outside of the L foot. Scoop belly and pull back on the foot to feel stretch in the R shoulder blade. L arm reaches behind you and look back to back hand. Take 3 full breathes as you push the L foot away, like pushing on the gas pedal. Then, shrug the R shoulder up to the ear and drop down (4 times). Hold a few more breathes then release and same thing other side.

Neck Stretch

Seated with one leg crossed in front of the other. Shoulders stay square, facing forward. Drop the L ear toward the L shoulder and hold for 6-8 breathes, imagine energy out the top of your head. Then, return center and same thing on the R.

Slow and steady, please don't force, always do your best, of course

With Aloha ~ Kym

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