

STRONG BACK, STRONG FUTURE: STRETCHING

#1



1. Downward Dog: ~15-30 second hold

- Start on your hands and knees
- Tuck your toes underneath you and slowly push up into an inverted “V” shape

#2



2. Pigeon: ~15-30 second hold each side

- Start on your hands and knees
- Slowly move your arms forward while bringing one knee forward
- Straighten the other leg behind you. Slowly lower your chest towards the floor until a strong but comfortable stretch is felt.

#3



3. Modified Bretzel with Rotation: ~15-30 second hold each side

- Start on your hands and knees
- Bring one foot in front of you and one behind you with both knees bent
- Rotate your torso towards the front leg, supporting yourself with your arms

#1) Downward Dog: The downward dog is a full body stretch for the hamstrings, calves, and spine. In addition, it can improve strength through the arms, shoulders, and core. Make sure that your shoulders are relaxed while completing the stretch.

#2) Pigeon: This stretch improves hip mobility which is essential for reduction of low back discomfort. In addition, it targets the piriformis muscle which is commonly associated with sciatic nerve symptoms.

#3) Modified Bretzel with Rotation: Similar to the pigeon, the bretzel stretch is focused on hip mobility, specifically internal and external rotation. The addition of the trunk rotation allows for a stretch of the low back musculature as well.

STRONG BACK, STRONG FUTURE: STRETCHING

#4



4. Child's Pose: ~15-30 second hold

- Start on your hands and knees
- Slowly lower your hips back towards your heels while bringing your arms straight forward until a stretch is felt through the back and shoulders.

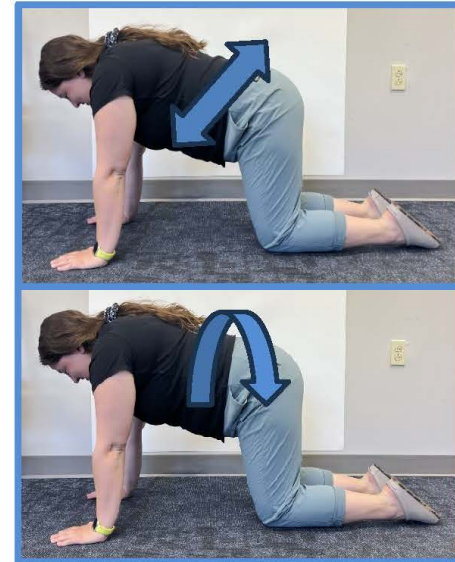
#5



5. Cat/Cow: 10 times each direction

- Start on your hands and knees with your hands in line with your shoulders
- Arch your upper back towards the ceiling.
- Then, push your chest down towards the floor.

#6



6. Pelvic mobility: 10 times each direction

- Start on your hands and knees with your hands in line with your shoulders
- Begin to move the hips/pelvis side-to-side.
- Follow this by completing circles with your pelvis/hips in both directions

#4) Child's Pose: Helps to lengthen muscles throughout the entire spine as well as to open the hips. If you are struggling to get comfortable, try widening your knees to allow your upper body to fit between your hips.

#5) Cat/Cow: Focused on improving thoracic mobility or mobility through your mid back. It is essential that your mid back moves well to reduce demand on the low back.

#6) Pelvic Mobility: It is essential that the pelvis move in all directions to decrease the movement required at the low back. While performing this stretch, focus on keeping the low back still and allowing the movement to come from the hips/pelvis itself.

STRONG BACK, STRONG FUTURE: STRETCHING

#7



7. Open Books: ~10 second hold, 5-8 times each side

- Start laying on your side with your legs crossed for stability and arms straight in front of you
- Slowly “open” one arm up, following your fingers with your eyes until a stretch is felt through the mid back
- After ~ 10 sec, “close” the book by bringing your arms back together

#8



8. Thread the Needle: ~10 second hold, 5-8 times on each side

- Begin in the child's pose (see #4)
- Reach one arm underneath the other until a comfortable stretch is felt through the mid back
- Return to child's pose and reach with the opposite arm

#9



9. Seated Thoracic Extension: ~15-30 second hold

- Sit in a low back chair with your feet flat on the ground and your hands behind your head
- Lean backwards and allow your head and neck to fold back until your looking up towards the ceiling

#7) Open Book: To improve thoracic mobility aka movement through the mid back area. Improving thoracic mobility can reduce low back discomfort as well as neck and shoulder stiffness.

#8) Thread the Needle: Another stretch designed to improve thoracic rotation . It is similar to child's pose however, because it also involves the arm, it is more of whole body stretch than child's pose alone.

#9) Seated Thoracic Extension: Focuses on improving thoracic mobility in a different plane of motion, flexion/extension or forward/backward

STRONG BACK, STRONG FUTURE: STRENGTH EXERCISES

#1



1. Dead bugs on Ball: 10-15 times each side

- Start with your back on a Swiss ball, feet flat on the floor, and arms by your side
- Lift up opposite arm and leg while maintaining stability on the ball

#2



2. Bird Dog on Ball: 10-15 times each side

- Start laying on your belly on a Swiss ball with feet and arms planted firmly on the floor
- Lift opposite arm and leg from the floor while focusing on keeping the hips level and core engaged

#3



3. Suitcase Carry: 25-50 ft each

- Stand tall and hold a weight in one arm
- Ensuring that the shoulders are relaxed, walk forward while holding the weight

#1) Dead Bug on Ball: Strengthens core musculature. Ensure that the core is engaged to reduce potential activation of low back musculature.

#2) Bird Dog on Ball: Strengthens the core and hip musculature. Make sure to pick a ball that allows you to have both your feet and hands supported firmly on the floor.

#3) Suitcase Carry: Make sure to keep yourself in a tall upright posture and avoid leaning to one side. This exercise helps to strengthen the obliques and core musculature.

STRONG BACK, STRONG FUTURE: STRENGTH EXERCISES

#4



- 4. Front Plank:** 15-30 second hold
- Start on your hands and knees
 - Push yourself up into a tabletop position with the arms and legs straight. Your body should be one straight line from head to feet.

#5



- 5. Side Plank:** 15-30 second hold each side
- Start laying on your side with your elbow bent and directly under your shoulder.
 - Push yourself up onto your elbow and straighten your legs out to support your body weight.

#6



- 6. Single Leg Bridge:** 10-15 times each
- Start laying on your back. Bring one knee up to your chest and hold it in place.
 - Push off your heel on the opposite foot, lifting your buttocks off the ground.

#4) Front Plank: Make sure to keep your core and glutes engaged to keep yourself in a straight line. Avoid bending at the waist and pushing your buttocks up towards the sky. This exercise strengthens the core musculature.

#5) Side Plank: Keep your body in a straight line and focus on engaging your core. This exercise strengthens your obliques, core muscles that run up/down the sides of your body.

#6) Single Leg Bridge: The goal of the bridge is to engage the glute muscles (gluteus medius, gluteus maximum, and gluteus minimus). When active, these muscles provide stability to the hips and reduce the demand on the low back.

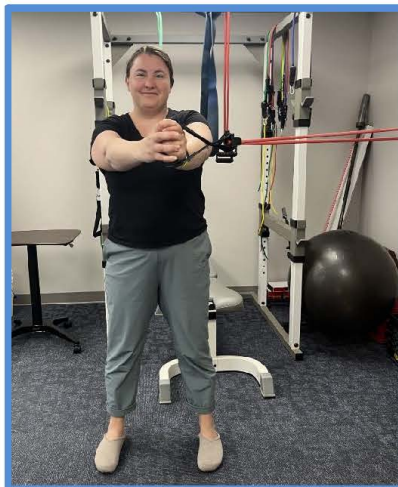
STRONG BACK, STRONG FUTURE: STRENGTH EXERCISES



BlueCross BlueShield
of Vermont

An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

#7



7. Pallof Press: ~10 second hold, 10-15 times each side

- Start in standing with feet shoulder width apart. Hold onto an exercise band anchored about chest height.
- Walk away from the wall until you have tension on the band.
- Push your hands away from your body and hold this position.

#8



8. Diagonal Chop: 10-15 times each side

- Start in standing with feet shoulder width apart. Hold onto a band that is anchored above head height.
- Pull diagonally across the body while keeping the arms straight.

#9



9. Diagonal Lift: 10-15 times each side

- Start in standing with feet shoulder width apart. Hold onto a band that is anchored at ankle height
- Pull diagonally across the body while keeping the arms straight.

#7) Pallof Press: Make sure to keep the shoulders relaxed while holding your arms out in front of you. This exercise engages the core musculature as you resist the rotational force.

#8) Diagonal Chop: Another rotational based core exercise with a focus on stability. Make sure to keep the arms straight to increase demands on the core musculature.

#9) Diagonal Lift: Another rotational based core exercise with a focus on stability. Make sure to keep the arms straight to increase demands on the core musculature.

STRENGTHENING