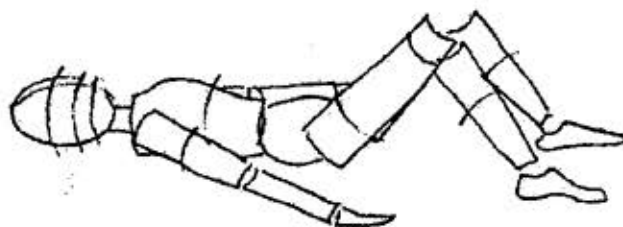


SITE-SPECIFIC EXERCISES FOR STRENGTHENING AND FLEXIBILITY

_____ Times Per Day

ON YOUR BACK

_____ 1. DECOMPRESSION EXERCISE



Supine lying. On your back. Increase tolerance for lying on your back.

Pillows/Head/Neck

Support: _____

Knees/Feet:** _____

Arms: _____

Other Considerations: _____

*If head tilts back (chin is tilted upward,) support the HEAD by placing folded towels or pillows under the HEAD.

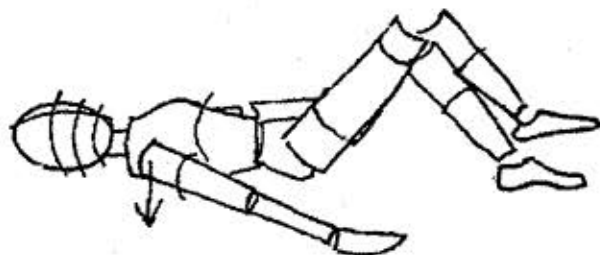
If head tilts down (chin is towards the chest,) support the NECK with a towel roll or other support.

Some persons will need BOTH the head and neck supported.

**The hook-lying position is sufficient bend in knees; however, sometimes 90/90 position should be used to start the program.

Benefits: 1. Takes compression off vertebral bodies (front of backbone ;)
2. Increases tolerance for lying on the back; 3. Helps relieve back pain

2. SHOULDER PRESS



Lie on back as in Decompression Exercise (# 1). Press backs of shoulders downward towards supporting surface. *

Hold: _____ Relax. Repeat: _____

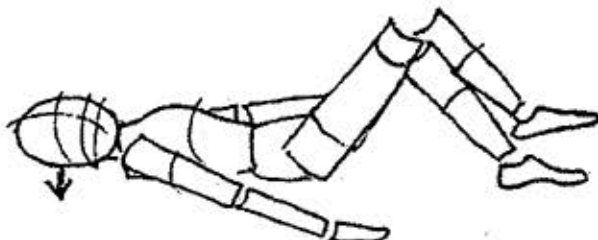
_____ If you are unable to do this movement with both shoulders at the same time, do one shoulder at a time and work up to being able to do both at the same time.

_____ If you are unable to do one shoulder at a time, you may need to lie in the Decompression Exercise position for a few minutes each day until the muscles on the front of your chest loosen up and you can press one or both shoulders downward.

Benefits:

1. Strengthens scapular retractors and mid-upper back extensors.
2. Stretches the pectoral and other anterior shoulder muscles.

3. HEAD PRESS



Lie on back as in Decompression Exercise (# 1). There are three variations to this exercise. Do the one that is checked for you.

____ Variation A: Head tilted with chin facing upward (cervical extension.) Tuck chin **SLIGHTLY** towards chest. Feel lengthening on back of neck. Feel weight on back of head. Press head downward into supporting surface.

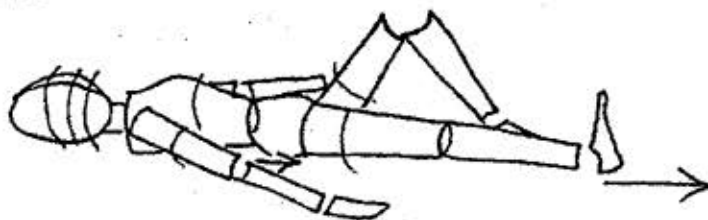
____ Variation B: Head that is tilted with chin facing downward towards chest (cervical flexion.) Tilt chin **SLIGHTLY** upward. Feel weight on back of head. Press head downward into supporting surface.

____ Variation C: Head and neck in neutral. Hold chin in position. Feel weight on back of head. Press head downward into supporting surface.

Hold: _____ Relax. Repeat: _____

Benefits: 1. Strengthens the neck extensors; 2. Helps promote a more neutral cervical spine.

4. _____ LEG LENGTHENER



Lie on back as in Decompression Exercise (# 1). Straighten one leg down to the supporting surface. Keep leg in alignment (do not rotate or slide it outward); knee cap should face directly up towards ceiling, leg in alignment with hip. With knee as straight as you can get it, pull toes AND forefoot towards knee, extend the heel and "lengthen" the calf.

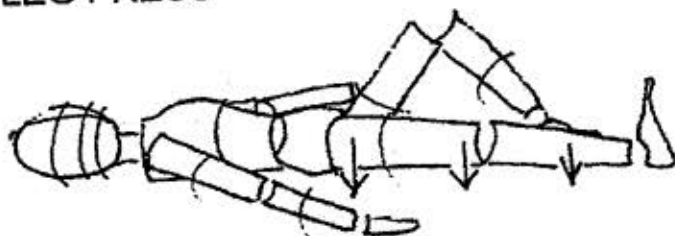
_____ Variation 1: Lengthen the leg by pulling the pelvis away from the rib cage.

_____ Variation 2: Lengthen the leg by imagining that you are pressing the bottom of your foot into a plaster-of-paris wall, such that you could make a mold of your foot on the wall.

Hold: _____. Relax. Repeat: _____
Do in sets of: _____. Each leg: _____

Benefits: 1. Stretches the hip flexors, quadratus lumborum, hamstrings (primarily at insertion,) and gastrocnemius muscles.

5. LEG PRESS



Lie on back as in Decompression Exercise (# 1). Straighten one leg down to the supporting surface. Keep leg in alignment (do not rotate or slide it outward); knee cap should face directly up towards ceiling. With knee as straight as you can get it, pull toes AND forefoot towards knee. Imagine you are lying on a nice, warm, sunny beach; press your entire leg down into the sand as if to make an impression of your leg in the sand.

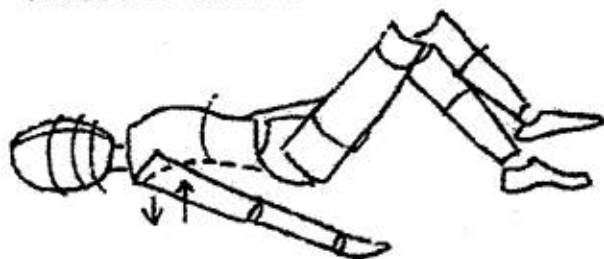
Hold: _____ Relax. Repeat: _____

Do in sets of: _____ Each leg: _____

Do both legs together: _____

Benefits: 1. Strengthens gluteus maximus, quadriceps and lower back extensors; 2. Stretches gastrocnemius, hip flexors.

6. THORACIC LIFT

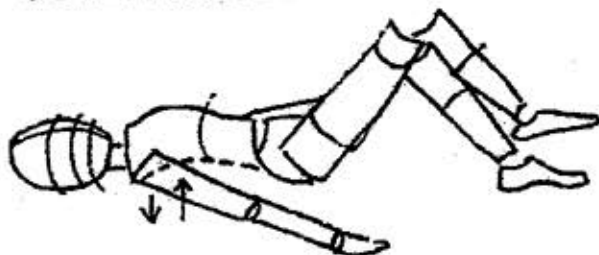


Lie on back as in Decompression Exercise (# 1). Do Shoulder Press Exercise (# 2.) Continue to press with your shoulders and lift spine by arching your upper back (between the shoulder blades) off the supporting surface.

Hold: _____ Relax Repeat: _____

Benefits: 1. Strengthens mid-upper back extensors and scapular retractors
2. Stretches pectoral and other anterior shoulder and chest muscles.

7. COVER THE BONES

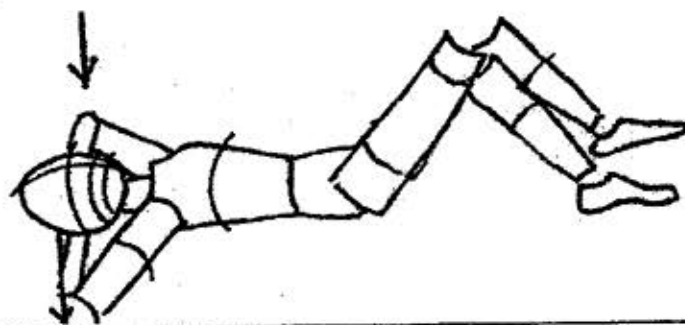


Lie on back as in Decompression Exercise (# 1). Do Shoulder Press and Thoracic Lift Exercises (#s 2 & 6) Continue to press with your shoulders and lift spine by arching your upper back (between the shoulder blades) off the floor/bed. Visualize the muscles that run length-wise up your back and "tuck" your bones up inside those muscles—"cover the bones" with the muscles.

Hold: _____ Relax. Repeat: _____

Benefits: 1. Strengthens mid-upper back extensors and scapular retractors
2. Stretches pectoral and other anterior shoulder and chest muscles.

8. ELBOW PRESS



Place one hand on top of the other underneath your HEAD. Press elbows downward into the supporting surface.

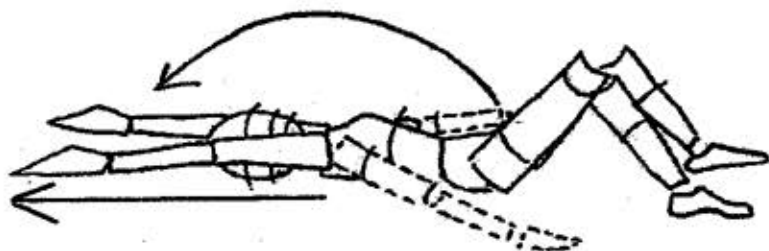
Hold _____ Relax Repeat _____

Benefits: 1. Strengthens mid-upper back muscles; 2. Increases shoulder flexibility.

NOTE: If your elbows do not touch the supporting surface, place folded towels or a pillow under your elbows for support—so that you have something to push against.

If you cannot get your hands underneath your head, get them as close to this position as possible. You may have to start this exercise with hands on your forehead and work until you can get your hands under your head. Do not press elbows back until you can get them under your head.

9. ARM LENGTHENERS

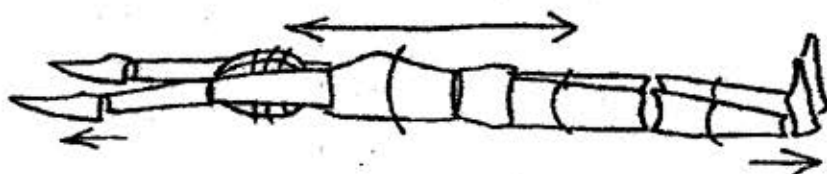


Start with arms at sides, _____ palms down or _____ thumbs up with palms facing body. Keep elbow straight, bring one arm up and back (alongside your head) as far as you can go. "Lengthen" arm by reaching towards wall behind you and pulling rib cage up and away from pelvis. Hold momentarily. Relax arm and repeat lengthening 1X. Bring arm back to your side, keeping elbow straight. Then bring both arms up and back (alongside your head) as far as you can. "Lengthen" both arms at the same time. Hold momentarily and relax arms back to your sides.

Notes:

1. Variation: Hold a stick or cane in your hands when lengthening both arms together.
2. Prevent excess lumbar lordosis (sway back) by tightening lower abdominal muscles to prevent pelvis and lower back movement.
3. Emphasize lengthening mid-section of body.
4. Lengthen fingers and imagine that you are sliding your fingers into a bucket of warm fudge—this results in a better stretch in the arm itself and will help prevent arching of your lower back.

10. MORNING STRETCHES



Combination of Arm and Leg Lengtheners. Two variations:

Variation #1: Start by lying on back with knees bent, feel flat on floor, arms at sides, _____ palms down or _____ thumbs up.

1. Straighten one leg down to floor and bring same arm up and alongside head. Lengthen arm and leg at same time. Return to start.
2. Repeat #1 on other side.
3. Straighten one leg and bring opposite arm up and alongside head. Lengthen arm and leg at same time. Return to start.
4. Repeat #3 on other sides.
5. Straighten both legs down to floor and bring both arms up and alongside head. Lengthen both arms and legs at same time. Hold momentarily and then return to start.

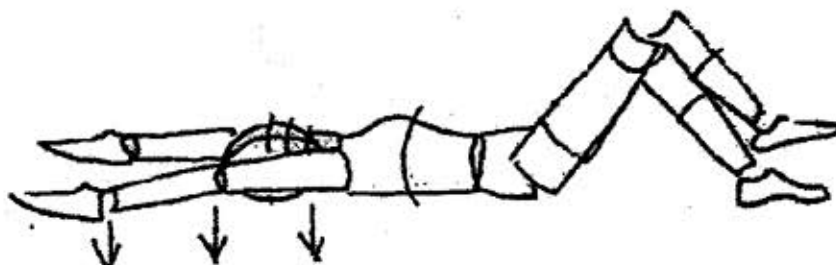
Variation #2: Start by lying on back with knees straight and arms up alongside head.

1. Lengthen one arm and leg at the same time. Relax.
2. Repeat #1 on other side. Relax.
3. Lengthen opposite arm and leg at the same time. Relax.
4. Repeat #3 on other sides. Relax.
5. Lengthen both arms and legs together.

Repetitions: _____

Important: DO NOT HOLD YOUR BREATH DURING THESE STRETCHES. Breathe OUT as you stretch and lengthen.

11. ARM PRESS



Start lying on your back with knees bent, feet flat, arms at sides
_____ palms down _____ thumbs up. Bring one arm up and back alongside
your head so that arm rests on the floor. Press arm into the floor.

Hold _____ Relax. Repeat _____

Bring arm back to your side, keeping elbow straight.

Repeat same exercise with other arm.

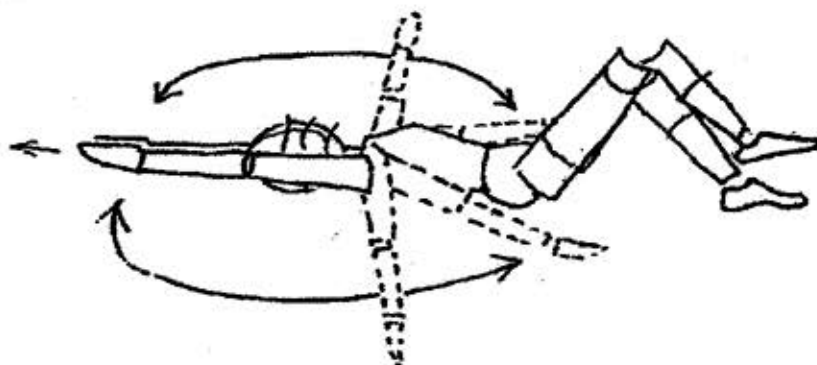
Repeat with both arms at the same time _____.

Benefits: 1. Strengthens lower trapezius muscle. 2. Increases shoulder flexibility.

NOTE:

This exercise is done best when arm rests on the floor next to head with elbow straight. If your arm(s) do not reach the floor, place a roller, pillow or folded towel under the wrists and press wrist and arm downward against the support. This exercise is intended to be an isometric exercise.

12. ANGELS IN THE SNOW

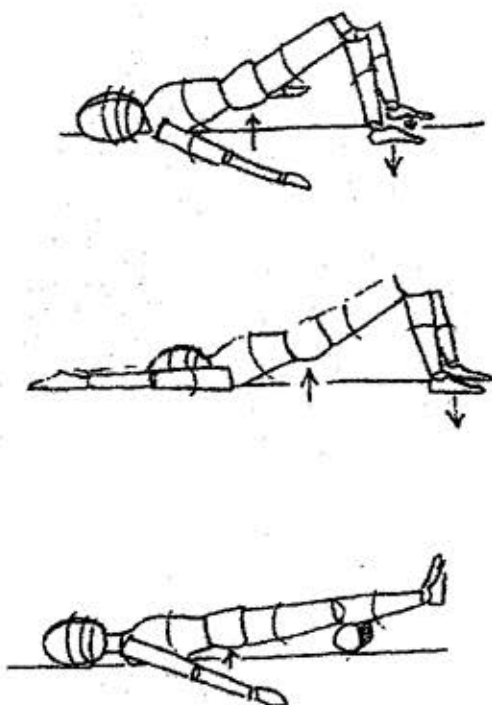


Start in Decompression Exercise position—Exercise #1. PALMS FACING UPWARD. Keeping in contact with floor, slowly slide one arm out to the side as far as you can. "Lengthen" your arm slightly, hold momentarily and then return arm to your side. Repeat with other arm. Repeat with both arms moving together.

Right arm _____. Left arm _____. Both arms _____.

IMPORTANT: Arm/arms should be on the supporting surface at all times. Pretend you are lying in a snow bank (or on a sand dune) and you want to leave an impression of your arm movement in the snow/sand.

13. BRIDGING — 3 Variations



On back, arms alongside body, palms up (as in Decompression Exercise position,) elbows straight, knees bent, feet flat on floor resting on triangles of support, feet and knees hip distance apart.

1. Do Shoulder Press and Thoracic Lift. Hold this position as you tighten pelvic floor, draw belly button towards front of backbone. Hold stabilization as you press into feet and raise back off floor.

!!LIFT ONLY AS HIGH AS YOU CAN WITHOUT CRAMPING OR PAIN!!

Hold _____. Relax. Repeat _____

2. With arms stretched out over your head and resting on or near the floor, repeat #1 (without Shoulder Press and Thoracic Lift.) Hold _____. Relax. Repeat _____

3. Foam roller under knees. Kick feet up by straightening knees—keep knees on roller. Repeat # 1, starting with Shoulder Press and Thoracic Lift, pelvic floor and abdominal stabilization. Keep knees straight as you lift back off the floor.

Hold _____. Relax. Repeat _____

STANDING OR SITTING

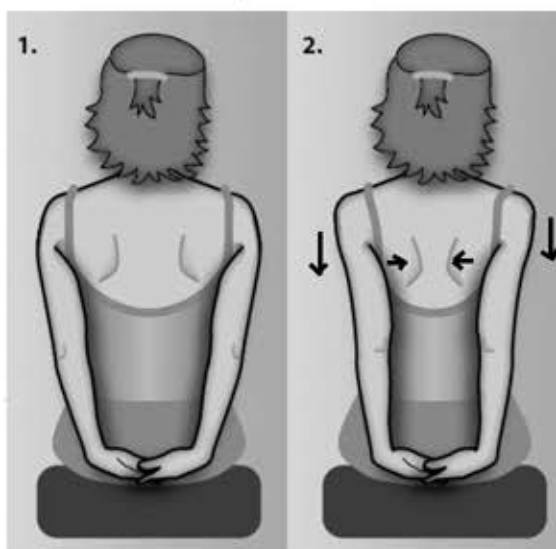
(SHOULDER BLADE SQUEEZES)

14. SCAPULAR RETRACTION

Stand with good body alignment, using any of the techniques in Postural Correction section. Bring hands to sides with palms facing FORWARD. Holding a stick helps to position the hands. Squeeze backbone with shoulder blades. Hold _____ Relax. Repeat _____

Special Considerations:

1. Do not thrust head forward—keep head stable as you perform the movement.
2. If you are unable to interlace fingers, use a stick or washcloth to position hands as close together as possible.
3. Do not arch your back as you perform the movement. Keep lower abdominals engaged to help prevent arching of the back.



15. SCAPULAR RETRACTION WITH DEPRESSION

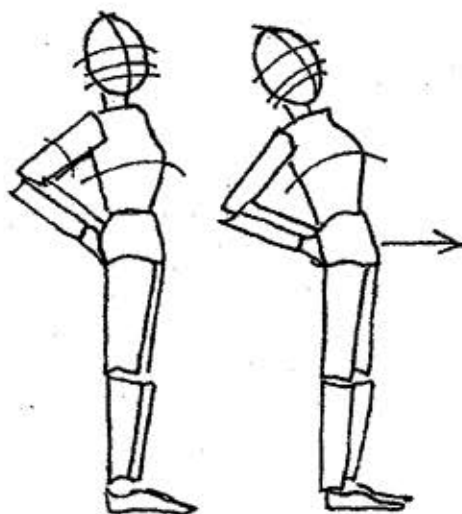
Do exercise #14. KEEPING SHOULDER BLADES TOGETHER, pull shoulders downward.

Hold _____ Relax. Repeat _____

Special Considerations:

1. Keep shoulder blades together as you pull shoulders downward.
2. This is a small movement—do not arch your back to get more movement.

16. FRONT-OF-HIP STRETCHER



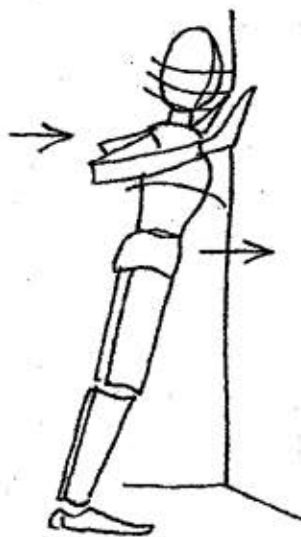
Stand with good body alignment, using any of the techniques in Postural Correction section. Place hands on waist **THUMBS FACING FORWARD**. Squeeze buttocks and gently press hips forward over knees. Lengthen the front of your body as you press hips forward—do NOT try to bend upper body backwards—let it come back as a result of the hips going forward. Keep head in alignment—do not bring head back.

Hold _____ Relax. Repeat _____

DO NOT:

1. Bend knees
2. Pelvic tilt
3. Pull upper back backwards

17. PUSHAWAYS



Stand, facing wall/corner/doorway, hands on wall at shoulder height.

KEEPING ELBOWS UP, lean into wall as if to touch abdomen to wall. **KEEP HEELS ON FLOOR.**

Then, **PUSH AWAY** with arms. Pretend that your body is a board and does not bend anywhere except elbows and ankles. Keep head in alignment with body.

This exercise is similar to a standard military push-up except it is done in a standing position.

Hold _____ Relax. Repeat _____

NOTE: Using a wall is easiest. Progress to using a corner or doorway as you can tolerate.

VARIATION: Keeping leg in alignment with hip, place one foot behind the other. Bend the forward knee, keep back heel on the floor and lean into the wall to stretch the calf on the back leg. Press the same hip (as the back leg) forward, keep chest up, tighten lower abdominals as you stretch.

Hold _____ Relax. Repeat _____

18. OFF-THE-WALL



Walk up to a wall and, facing the wall, place your toes touching, or as close to touching as you can get, the wall. "Walk" your fingers up the wall so that your arms are as close to your head as possible and parallel to one another.

Keeping the elbow **STRAIGHT**, raise one arm off the wall.

Hold _____ Relax. Repeat _____

Then do movement with other arm.

Then do movement with both arms together.

Benefits: 1. Strengthens lower trapezius muscle.

NOTE: This exercise strengthens the same muscles as the **ARM PRESS** exercise (# 11.) These muscles are very important for stabilizing the shoulder blade during shoulder joint movement. Fit this exercise into your daily routine frequently.

19. WALL SLIDES.



Stand with your back to a wall, feet about 12-18 inches away from the wall, knees and feet apart, knees pointing over toes. Slide down the wall by bending knees. Slide down as far as you can and still be able to return to starting position without undue strain (coming straight up without bending forward over to push on legs to come up.)

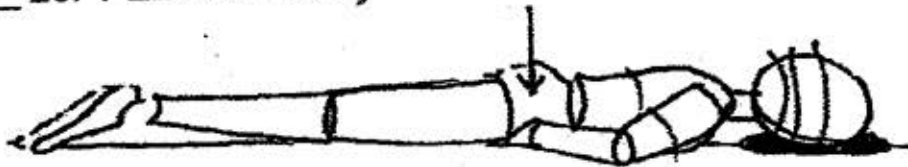
Hold the maximum position _____.

No need to repeat if you hold long enough. Otherwise, repeat 1-2X.

LYING ON ABDOMEN

At first, you may have to just get used to being in this position. Practice lying on your abdomen, with a small pillow or rolled towel under your forehead or your forehead resting on your hands, palms down. A pillow may be placed under your hips, and a roll under your ankles to prevent pressure on toes or front of feet.

20. PELVIC PRESS



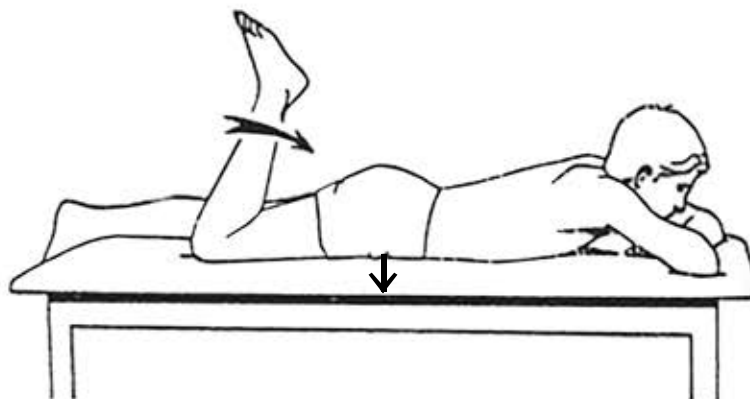
Place your hands underneath your belly. Form the letter "V" with your hands and place your thumbs at or just above your navel and your fingertips pointing towards the pubic bone. Feel the weight of your body on your hands. Increase the weight of your body on your hands.

Hold _____ Relax. Repeat _____

NOTE:

1. This is NOT a pelvic tilt movement.
2. If you are doing this movement correctly, you should feel a slight rise of your legs off the floor and/or a rise in the upper body off the floor also.
3. This movement is necessary to help stabilize the lower back and pelvis during other exercises in this position.

_____ 21. PELVIC PRESS WITH KNEE BENDS.



Do the pelvic press exercise (# 20.) Holding the pelvic press tightly, do the following movements:

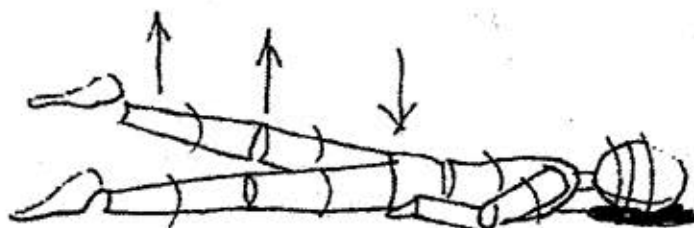
_____ 1. Bend one knee as far as you can. Hold 2-3 seconds. Relax. Repeat 3-5 times.

_____ 2. Repeat #1 with other leg.

_____ 3. Repeat, bending both knees at the same time.

_____ 4. **RELAX THE PELVIC PRESS.** Bend both knees, bringing the heels as close to the buttocks as you can. Hold the heels close to the buttocks as you then do the pelvic press. Feel the stretch on the front of the hips.

22. LEG LIFTS



Lying on abdomen, arms under pelvis, at sides or under forehead. Keep head in alignment—note that resting on the chin causes the neck to hyperextend and this position is not advised.

DO PELVIC PRESS. Then, lifting from waist, keeping knee straight, lengthen and lift one leg from the floor.

Hold _____ Relax. Repeat _____

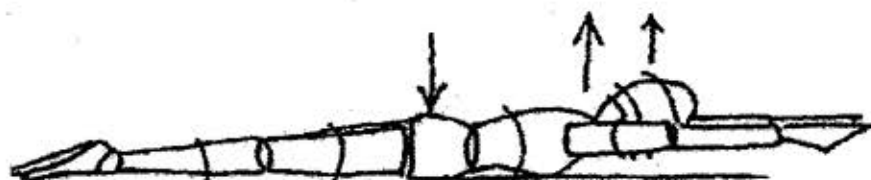
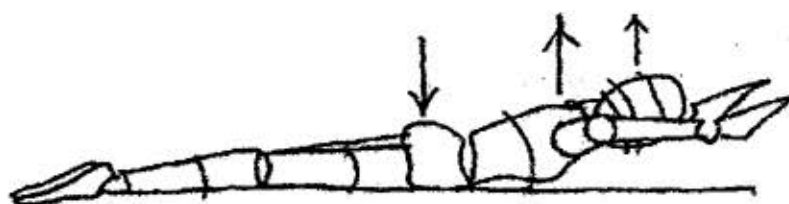
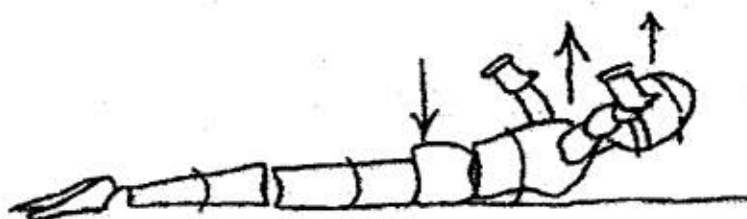
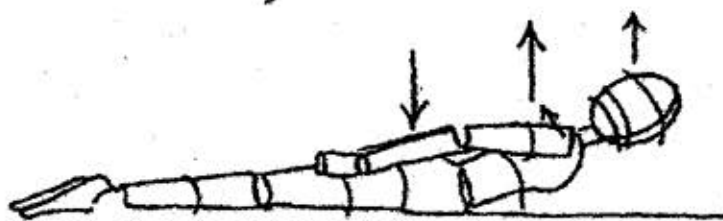
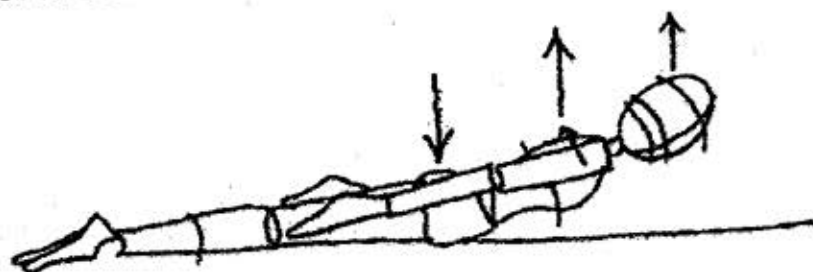
Repeat with other leg.

Then repeat, lifting both legs at the same time. Hold _____ Relax.

HINTS:

1. Press opposite leg into the floor as you lift one leg.
2. Lengthen leg as you lift.
3. Pretend leg starts at your waist so that you engage your buttocks muscles as you lift the leg.
4. Do NOT TWIST your body as you lift the leg.

23. SHOULDER BLADE SQUEEZES



Perform Pelvic Press Exercise (# 19.) Hold Pelvic Press as you squeeze backbone with shoulder blades, raising front part of shoulders off the floor. The raise chest and upper back—keep head in alignment and do not hyperextend your neck.

Hold _____ Relax Repeat _____

Do above movement with:

- _____ 1. Arms resting along side body, palms up, elbows straight. As you raise upper body raise arms also.
- _____ 2. Fingers interlaced behind lower back, palms up. Do not raise hands off body as you lift your body.
- _____ 3. Arms straight out to the sides at shoulder level, elbows straight, palms down. As you raise shoulders, chest, head and upper back, raise arms also.
- _____ 4. Arms out to sides at a 90° angle with elbows bent at 90° angle, palms down. As you raise shoulders, chest head and upper back, raise arms also.

IMPORTANT: MAKE SURE YOU ACTUALLY SQUEEZE SHOULDER BLADES TOGETHER AND RAISE YOUR SHOULDERS BEFORE LIFTING CHEST AND UPPER BACK. KEEP PELVIC PRESS ENGAGED.

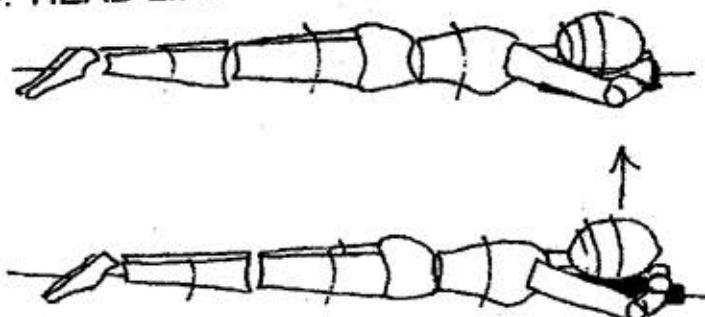
- _____ 5. Arms resting on floor alongside your head, as close to your head as possible, parallel to one another, palms down, elbows straight.

Perform Pelvic Press and hold it as you:

1. Raise one arm off the floor. Hold _____. Relax.
2. Raise other arm off the floor. Hold _____. Relax
3. Raise both arms off the floor. Hold _____. Relax

For Variation #5, it is not necessary to squeeze the shoulder blades together before raising the arms. Keep elbows straight and alongside your head.

24. HEAD LIFT



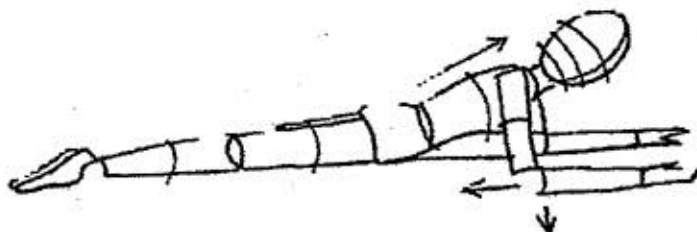
Lying on abdomen, forehead resting on hands or folded towel, palms down. TUCK CHIN SLIGHTLY AND KEEP IT TUCKED as you raise forehead straight up off hands.

Hold _____ Relax. Repeat _____

Benefits: 1. Strengthens neck extensors—muscles that hold your head up against the force of gravity.

- NOTES: This exercise is the same exercise as the head press (# 3) only done in a prone position.
1. Do not tilt chin up as you lift head—keep it slightly tucked. Imagine that you are looking in a mirror and can see your entire face in the mirror. Keep looking in the mirror as you lift your head. (If you are tilting your chin as you lift, you will see more chin than forehead.)
 2. Do not raise shoulders or push on arms.

25. THE SPHINX



Prop your upper body up on forearms with elbows positioned directly under your shoulders. Keep pelvis on the floor as much as possible.

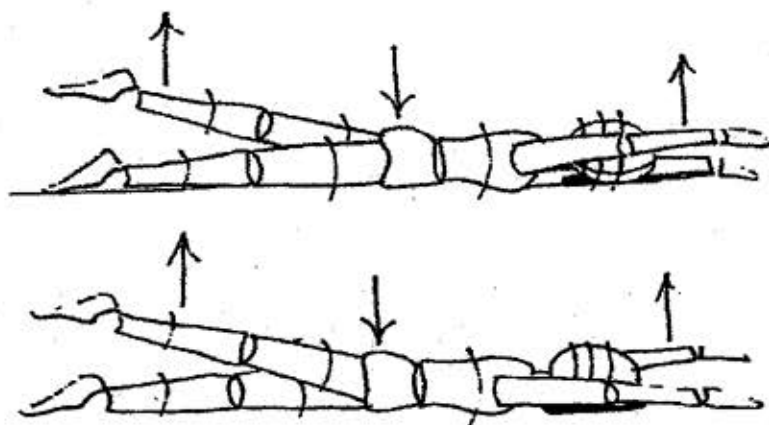
1. Take long, slow breaths and allow your back to relax on each breath out. Keep legs and feet together. Stay in this position a few moments.

2. Press ELBOWS directly down into the floor. "Pull" back with your elbows (without actually moving them) as if you were going to pull your body straight through between your arms. Do not allow chest to drop—keep chest up and back slightly arched—do not round your back.

Hold _____ Relax. Repeat _____.

Benefits: 1. Stretches the front of the hip, abdominal and lower back areas.

26. LEG/ARM LIFT



Lying on abdomen, arms alongside head, palms down, elbows straight, arms as close to your head as possible and parallel to one another. Perform Pelvic Press (# 19) first. Hold pelvic press as you.

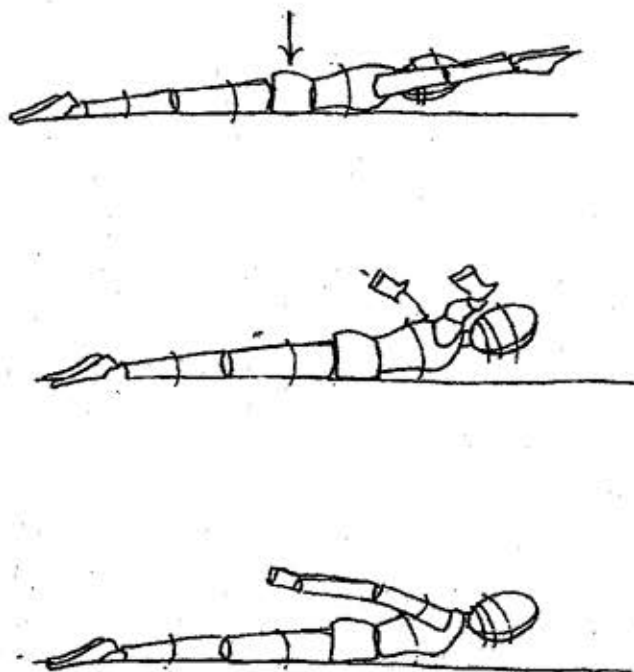
1. Raise right arm off floor.
2. Raise left arm off floor.
3. Raise right leg off floor.
4. Raise left leg off floor.
5. Raise both arms at same time.
6. Raise both legs at same time.
7. Raise opposites—right arm/left leg and then left arm/right leg.
8. Raise both arms and both legs at the same time.

For each motion: Hold _____ Relax. Repeat _____

NOTE:

1. Keep head down as you lift.
2. Do not twist body as you lift.
3. Keep pelvic press engaged as you lift.

27. COMBINATION EXERCISE

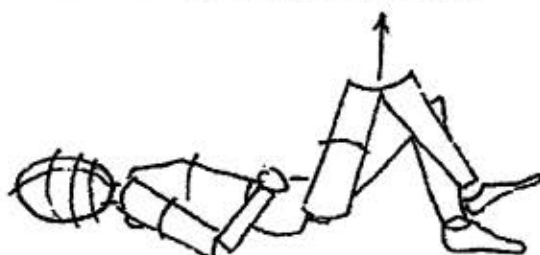


Lying on abdomen, arms alongside head, palms down, elbows straight, head resting on forehead.

DO PELVIC PRESS (#19) first. The, holding Pelvic Press,

1. Raise both arms, chest and head off floor; hold this position a few seconds, then.....
2. Bring arms out to sides at shoulder level and raise body up a little further, hold a few seconds, then.....
3. Interlace fingers behind your back and raise a little further yet, hold a few seconds, the collapse (OOPS!....I meant..relax.)

28. ABDOMINAL STRENGTHENING



Lie on your back, knees bent, feet flat on floor. Palpate prominent front hip bones (ASIS) with your fingers, then slide fingers about 1/2 -1 inch towards the midline of your body. Tighten your lower abdominal muscles by pressing your navel toward the front of the backbone.....you may feel your gluteal muscles and pelvic floor muscles tighten also. DO NOT DO A PELVIC TILT.

Hold the position of your pelvis with your tightened lower abdominal muscles as you:

1. Slowly slide the heel of one foot away from your buttocks until the leg is straight. Hold momentarily and return heel to start. Repeat on other leg.
2. Keeping your knee BENT, pick one foot up and down off the floor 5-8X.
3. Repeat #1 with other foot.
4. Alternately pick up each foot up and down off the floor 5-8X.
5. Pick up one foot and hold it in the air (at approximately a 90/90 position of the hip and knee. As you hold your leg there, pick the other foot up and down off the floor 5-8X.
6. Repeat #4 with other leg.
7. Pick up one foot and hold it in the air. Then pick up other foot and make bicycle movements with that second leg. Make small circles and then larger ones. "Cycle" in both directions.
8. Repeat #6 on other side.
9. Pick up one foot and hold it in the air. Pick up other foot next to it. Then bicycle both legs, first in one direction and then the other. Remember that a bicycle motion is a circle. You can also, however, do stair-steppers and other leg movements with this exercise.

REMEMBER: During all leg movement, the pelvis remains STATIONARY. MONITOR THE MOVEMENT WITH YOUR FINGERTIPS. DO NOT ADVANCE THE EXERCISE UNTIL YOU CAN CONTROL THE PELVIC MOVEMENT.

29. BREATHING

1. Balloon Breath

Lie on your back as in Decompression Exercise (#1). Place your hands lightly on your belly. Make a "V" with your hands and place your thumbs just above your navel and point your fingertips towards the pubic bone. Feel your body movement as you breathe. Close your eyes so that you can feel the movement better.

Pretend that you have a balloon in your belly. As you breathe IN, blow UP the balloon. As you breathe OUT, DEFLATE the balloon. Press out against your hands as you breathe in and then press in gently with your hands to assist the breath out.

Practice this technique 5-10 minutes (or more) before and after your exercise session.

2. Lower Rib Cage Breath

Place your hands lightly on the sides of your rib cage, fingertips pointed up. As you breathe IN, expand the lower ribs against your hands. As you breathe OUT, press gently with your hands to assist the breath out.

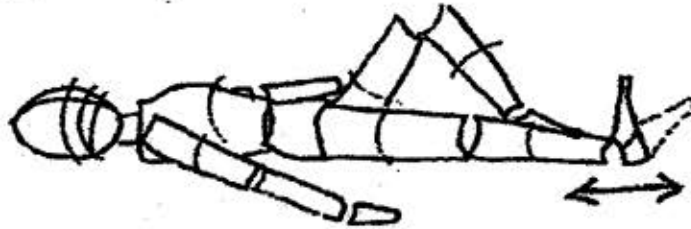
3. Upper Rib Cage Breath

Place your hands high up on your chest, just below the notch between the collar bones. As you breathe IN, expand the upper ribs against your hands. As you breathe OUT, press gently with your hands to assist the breath out.

4. Three Part Breath

Place one hand on your belly (lower abdomen) and the other hand on your upper rib cage. As you breathe IN, breathe in by expanding the belly first, then the lower rib cage, then the upper rib cage. Reverse the movement on the breath out.

30. ANKLE PUMPS



Lie on back or sit with knee extended and back supported. With knee straight, "pump" each ankle by alternately pulling toes and forefoot up towards the knee and away from the knee.

Emphasize movement of the HEEL—that is, pull the heel up as the toes move away from the knee and push the heel down as the toes move towards the knee.

Repeat movement many times.

NOTE:

This exercise is especially good if you have tightness or cramping in your calf muscles and limitation of ankle motion. Be sure to emphasize movement of the HEEL....in this way, you will better engage the calf muscles in the exercise.

31. BUTTOCK SQUEEZE



Lie on back with legs extended and together. Squeeze buttocks together.
Hold _____ Relax _____ Repeat _____

NOTE: These muscles can be surprisingly weak. To assist with the exercise, pretend you have a walnut between your buttocks muscles and try to crack the walnut. As you hold the exercise, say, "tight, tighter, tightest" so that you get a good contraction.

32. The SPINAL ROCK



The Spinal Rock is a modification of a Trager movement therapy that can be performed without the assistance of a therapist. Trager is a type of movement therapy that emphasizes rhythmic body movements. The Spinal Rock is an exercise that helps to both mobilize and relax the spine and you can learn to do this independently.

Start in the Decompression Exercise position. **Press/Release**—Press down and away from the body with the feet, then release the pressure. Do not actually move the feet from the floor. Alternately press and release the feet and feel the movement in the lower back that occurs as a result. Gradually increase pace.

VISUALIZATION:

1. **Relaxation**—the more relaxed you can be, the more you will feel this movement. Closing your eyes helps you to relax. At first, especially if you have soft tissue or joint restriction, you may not feel much movement and you also may try to control the movement with your pelvis and/or back. Allow your back to respond to the movement of your feet. Once you get the feel of the movement, you may feel your arms, hands, and even your neck and head respond to the movement of your feet.

EFFECTS OF THIS EXERCISE:

1. **Relaxation:** This exercise is intended to be relaxing for the back and, indeed, for the body as a whole. Close your eyes and allow your body to move in response to the pressure on your feet.

2. **Mobilization of the Small Joints of the Spine:** By keeping the movement gentle and rhythmic, the intention is to facilitate movement in the small joints of the back, to alternately compress and de-compress the discs between the vertebrae, thereby stimulating healthy joints and discs.

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID:

1. **Pelvic Tilts:** You may find a tendency to initiate the movement with your pelvis, by alternately tilting the pelvis forward and back. Resist the tendency to do this. The movement should be initiated by the feet and the pelvis and back should move as a consequence of the pressure and movement of the feet.

VARIATIONS:

1. **Toe Tapping**—"Tap" your feet by rhythmically raising and lowering the front of the feet. If you feel the pressure on your feet, you feel that, to tap your feet, you are alternately pressing and releasing on your heels. Gradually build in pace and pressure as you feel the movement.

2. **Heel Tapping**—Tap your feet by rhythmically raising and lowering the heels of your feet. If you feel the pressure on your feet, you feel that, to tap your heels, you are alternately pressing and releasing on the balls of your feet. Gradually build in pace and pressure as you feel the movement.

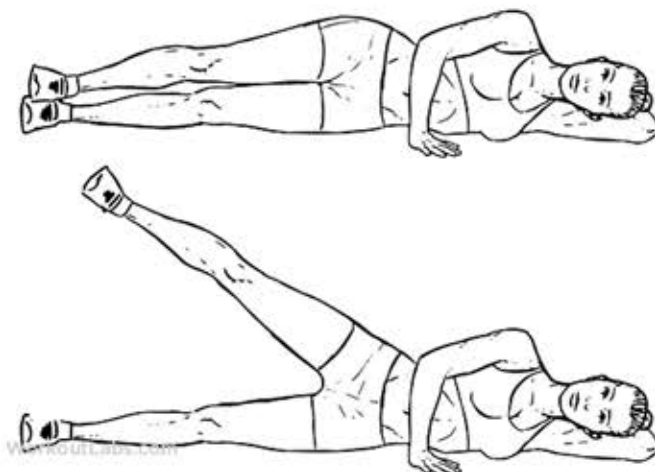
3. **Alternate Toe/Heel Tapping**—Tap your feet by rhythmically raising and lowering the your heels and then your toes. Both feet move in the same direction at the same time. Gradually build in pace and pressure as you feel the movement.

4. **Alternate Toe/Heel Tapping with toes and heels moving opposite from one another.** Tap your feet by rhythmically raising and lowering the your heels and then your toes. Feet are moving in opposition to each other. Gradually build in pace and pressure as you feel the movement. Hint: Keep your mind on your FEET during this one to help you stay in rhythm.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON THIS EXERCISE:

The intent of this exercise is to stimulate spinal movement by movement of the feet, to mobilize and create flexibility of the spinal segments, and to encourage relaxation of the spine. As you begin to feel the rhythm and the movement, gradually increase the pace and depth of the movement. Close your eyes so that your visual field does not limit head movement. You can do as many repetitions of this movement as you would like. I personally have kept the movement going for 200-300 repetitions and, afterward, I feel a deep relaxation in my back.

33. SIDE LYING LEG LIFT



Lie on side, legs together and in alignment with body, one hand on floor in front of you, other hand supporting head or extended out under your head. Perform stabilizations. Keeping knee pointed straight ahead, lift SIDE of upper leg up towards ceiling. Hold maximal lift and breathe evenly. Repeat 2-3 times. Repeat on other side.

Yoga Props and Tips:

1. Use a block under front hand for stability.
2. This exercise strengthens the gluteus medius muscle, your most important hip stabilizer and it is important to do the exercise correctly. Do not roll the leg out and point toes towards the ceiling; do not roll your body. The SIDE of your foot and leg should be facing the ceiling.

Precautions:

Watch for pressure on the rib cage with this pose. If it is painful to lie on the ribs, try cushioning the rib cage with some foam padding. You may need to just get used to lying on your side in this way before you ever attempt to lift your leg.