



## STRETCHING EXERCISES - DAILY

Begin with a light warm-up for 10-15 minutes such as walking, biking on stationary bike, marching in place (aerobic activities should be selected that minimize joint stress). If pain, stiffness and fatigue are barriers to exercise, you might benefit from a warm shower or warm compress prior to exercise. Always maintain a steady stretch, never bouncing and do not force a stretch (go to the point of mild tension but not pain). Stretches may have a range of time to hold. Start with the shortest time and work your way to the longest time as you feel comfortable. For each additional repetition, try to stretch just a little further as you are able to do without pain. Remember to breathe throughout the stretch.

### CAT STRETCH



Hands should be directly under shoulders and knees should be directly under your hips. Contract your stomach muscles and push your spine toward the ceiling while tucking your chin down toward your chest. Reverse the stretch by allowing the back to relax forming a valley.

**Hold 3-5 seconds | 8-12 reps each direction**

### CHILD'S POSE STRETCH



Resting on your hands and knees. Push your bottom back and down onto your heels. You may also rest your forehead on the floor and bring your arms back to your sides to stretch the upper back.

**Hold 15-30 seconds | 3 reps**

### CHEST LIFT STRETCH



Lie flat on your stomach. Bend your elbows and place your hands under your shoulders. Press your hands down and gently lift your chest off the floor.

**Hold 15-30 seconds | 3 reps**

### KNEE TO CHEST STRETCH



Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Slowly bring your knees toward your chest and gently grasp your legs just below the knees. Hold and then slowly lower feet back to the floor. If this is difficult, you can stretch one leg at a time.

**Hold 15-30 seconds | 3 reps**



---

**STRETCHING EXERCISES - DAILY continued**

---

**SPINE TWIST**



Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor and arms straight outward. Turn your head to the right and gently roll both legs to your left side as far as comfortable (keep shoulders touching the floor). Return to starting position and turn your head to the left and roll the legs to the right side.

---

**Hold 15-30 seconds | 3 reps each side**

---



## STRENGTHENING EXERCISES- 2/3 TIMES A WEEK (NONCONSECUTIVE DAYS)

Strengthening activities should start at a relatively low intensity and gradually progress as pain tolerates.

### SUPERMAN



Lie flat on your stomach with your arms reaching out in front of you. Contract your abdomen and lift your chest while also squeezing your bottom and lifting your legs to the point of mild tension. Hold then slowly lower back to starting position.

**3-5 seconds | 5-7 reps**

### PLANK



Lie flat on your stomach. Bend your arms 90 degrees and bring them under your chest. Push off the floor, raising up onto your toes and resting on your forearms. Contract your abdomen to keep your back flat and in a straight line from head to heel. Hold as long as you are able to keep your back straight. Lower, rest and repeat.

**Hold 15-60 seconds | 3 reps**

### OPPOSITE ARM & LEG RAISE



Hands should be directly under shoulders and knees directly under hips. Lift left arm and right leg at the same time until they are in line with the body. Contract abdomen to keep back straight. Hold then slowly lower to starting position. Repeat lifting right arm and left leg. Continue alternating.

**Hold 3-5 seconds | 8-12 reps**

### PARTIAL CRUNCH



Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Take a deep breath and as you slowly exhale, contract your abdomen and lift your head and shoulders slightly up off the floor, keeping your chin up, not tucking. Hold and slowly return to starting position while inhaling.

**Hold 3-5 seconds | 8-12 reps | 3 sets**