



Six Stretches:

To Help Back Pain

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Knee to Chest

Use this stretch to align pelvis and stretch lower back and rear end muscles. Lie flat on your back with toes pointed to the sky. Slowly bend your right knee and pull your leg up to you chest. Wrap your arms around your thigh, knee or shin, and gently pull the knee towards your chest. Hold for 20 seconds and slowly extend the leg to starting position. Repeat three times each leg.



Lying Knee Twist

Use this movement to stretch the paraspinal muscles and strengthen the abdominal muscles. Lie on your back with your legs extended straight out. Bend the right knee up and cross it over the left side of your body. Hold in a position that allows you to feel a gentle stretch through the back and buttocks muscles for 20 seconds. Tighten your core muscles and rotate back to center. Repeat three times on each side.



Yoga Cat/Cow

Start this more by kneeling on all fours with your hands beneath your shoulders and your knees directly below your hips. Exhale and gently arch your spine. Inhale, tighten your core muscles and round your back, like a cat. Move slowly between movements and hold in each position for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 10 times.



Piriformis Seated Stretch

This stretch is designed to help lengthen the piriformis muscle over time. This muscle is often the source of sciatica, or radiating leg pain. Sitting with a straight back, cross your left leg over your right leg placing your foot next to your thigh and tuck your right leg in towards your buttocks. Place your right arm on your leg as pictured and slowly ease into a stretch. Be sure to keep your back straight and chest lifted. Hold for 20 seconds and alternative sides, three times.



Cobra Stretch

This movement is helpful to stretch tight abdominal muscles and the lower back. Start by lying on your stomach with your legs extended and with palms planted on either side of your head with your forearms and elbows flat on the ground. Slowly, push your body upwards, so your weight is resting on your forearms. Be sure to keep your hips on the ground. Once you reach a comfortable position that gently stretches your abdominal muscles and lower back, hold for 10 seconds. Slowly return to starting position and repeat five times. If you have more flexibility in your lower back, try straightening your arms.



Restful Pose

A common pose in yoga, the restful child's pose can help you relax your body. Position yourself on the floor on hands and knees with your knees just wider than hip distance apart. Turn your toes in to touch and push your hips backwards bending your knees. Once you reach a comfortable seated position, extend your arms forward fully and allow your head to fall forward into a relaxation position. Hold this pose for 20 seconds and slowly return to starting position. Repeat three times. For modification if you have shoulder pain, place your arms on either side of your body, extending towards your feet.

