

Low Back Stretches

Cat Cow-

From a hands and knees tabletop position, begin cow pose with an inhale. The belly sinks toward the ground, creating a dip in the back, and the head lifts as the gaze is directed upward. On an exhale, ease into a cat pose. The core muscles are pulled in toward the spine as the back rounds and the head releases gently toward the ground



Childs Pose/Sleepy Dog-

Bring your knees together and your buttocks to your feet. Exhale and slowly rest your torso over your thighs so that your forehead touches the ground stretching your arms over your head.



Pigeon-

Get down on your hands and knees and bring your right knee forward and out to the right side. Slide your left leg back and lower your torso bend your arms and place elbows on the floor holding this stretch for 15 to 30 seconds, switch sides and repeat.



Glute/Pretzel-

Begin lying flat on your back, both knees bent. Cross one leg over the other so that your ankle is resting on the opposite knee. Gently pull the uncrossed leg toward your chest until you feel a deep stretch in your glute. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds, then switch legs.



Lumbar Spine Stability: McGill's Big Three

Curl Up:

Lie on your back with your knees bent. Slide your hands under your lower back for support: you don't want your back flat against the floor.

Straighten one leg, then while keeping your neck and lower spine straight and unmoving, lifting your shoulder and chest off the floor. Hold this position for about eight seconds and repeat ten times. Then switch legs and repeat ten times.



Side-Bridge:

Lie on your side, with your legs bent at the knee. Bend your arm closest to the ground so that your forearm is flat against the floor. Slowly raise your hip off the floor, keeping your spine straight and hold for 8 to 10 seconds. Repeat on the other side. After a few weeks, do the exercise with your legs straight. The more you do the stretch the longer you should hold it till you are holding the stretch on your toes for 30 seconds each side.



Bird-Dog:

Start on all fours, and then slowly lift right arm and left leg until each is parallel to the ground. Hold for 8 seconds repeat with the opposite arm and leg. Do 10 reps on each side. Keep your spine straight, hip level and abdominal muscles slightly contracted. And don't forget to breathe.

