Spine Conditioning Program
Stretching Exercises

Head Rolls

Main muscles worked: Cervical spine muscles, trapezius
You should feel this stretch all around your neck and into your upper back
Equipment needed: None.

Step-by-step directions
- Sit in a chair or stand with your weight evenly distributed on both feet.
- Gently bring your chin toward your chest.
- Roll your head to the right and turn so that your ear is over your shoulder (1). Hold for 5 seconds.
- Gently roll your head back toward your chest and to the left. Turn your head so that your ear is over your left shoulder (2). Hold for 5 seconds.
- Slowly roll your head back and in a clockwise circle three times (3).
- Reverse directions and slow roll your head in a counterclockwise circle three times (4).

Tip: Do not shrug your shoulders up during this exercise.

Repetitions
3 sets of 3

Days per week
Daily

Kneeling Back Extension

Main muscles worked: Quadratus lumborum, erector spinae
You should feel this stretch in your lower back and your abdominals
Equipment needed: None.

Step-by-step directions
- Begin on your hands and knees with your shoulders positioned over your hands.
- Rock forward onto your arms, round your shoulders and allow your low back to drop toward the floor. Hold for 5 seconds.
- Rock backward and sit your buttocks as close to your heels as possible. Extend your arms and hold for 5 seconds.

Tip: Look down on the floor to keep your neck in alignment with your spine.

Repetitions
10

Days per week
Daily
Sitting Rotation Stretch

**Main muscles worked:** Piriformis, external oblique rotators, internal oblique rotators

*You should feel this stretch in your buttocks, as well as at your sides*

**Equipment needed:** None.

**Step-by-step directions**

- Sit on the floor with both legs straight out in front of you. Cross one leg over the other.
- Slowly twist toward your bent leg, putting your hand behind you for support.
- Place your opposite arm on the side of your bent thigh and use it to help you twist further.
- Look over your shoulder and hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Slowly come back to center.
- Repeat on the other side. Repeat the entire sequence 4 times.

**Tip**  
Sit up tall and keep your sit bones pressed into the floor throughout the stretch.

Modified Seat Side Straddle

**Main muscles worked:** Hamstrings, extensor muscles, erector spinae

*You should feel this stretch in the back of your thighs and your lower and middle back*

**Equipment needed:** None.

**Step-by-step directions**

- Sit on the floor with one leg extended to the side and the other leg bent.
- Keep your back straight and bend from your hips toward the foot of your straight leg. Reach your hands toward your toes and hold for 5 seconds.
- Slowly round your spine and bring your hands to your shin or ankle. Bring your head down as close to your knee as possible.
- Hold for 30 seconds and then relax for 30 seconds.
- Repeat on the other side. Repeat the sequence 10 times.

**Tip**  
Keep your extended leg straight as you bring your head down.

Hip Bridge

**Main muscles worked:** Lower back extensor, erector spinae, gluteal muscles, hamstrings

*You should feel this exercise in your lower back, buttocks, and back of your thigh*

**Equipment needed:** None.

**Step-by-step directions**

- Lie on your back on the floor with your arms at your sides, your knees bent, and your feet flat on the floor.
- Tighten your abdominal and gluteal muscles and lift your pelvis so that your body is in a straight line from your shoulders to your knees.
- Hold this position for 15 seconds.
- Slowly return to the start position and repeat.

**Tip**  
Center your weight over your shoulder blades. Do not tense up in your neck.