



### **Gastroc/Soleus Calf Stretch**

Place the ball of the foot on an elevated platform or step and let the heel drop to the floor. Keep the knee extended, and lean forward until you feel a stretch from the back of the knee into the Achilles tendon and possibly into the sole of the foot.

This stretches the Gastrocnemius muscle, which originates on the back of your femur (thigh bone) and inserts into your Achilles tendon. This muscle also transmits forces through the plantar fascia (muscles on the sole of the foot). The Gastroc is responsible for flexion of the knee and plantarflexion of the foot (pointing of the toes).

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Plantar Fascitis • Achilles Tendonitis • Calf Tightness/Pain • Knee Pain • Tight Hamstrings • Low Back Pain • Posterior Leg Pain • Sacroiliac Pain • ITB Pain



### **Soleus (Deep Calf) Stretch**

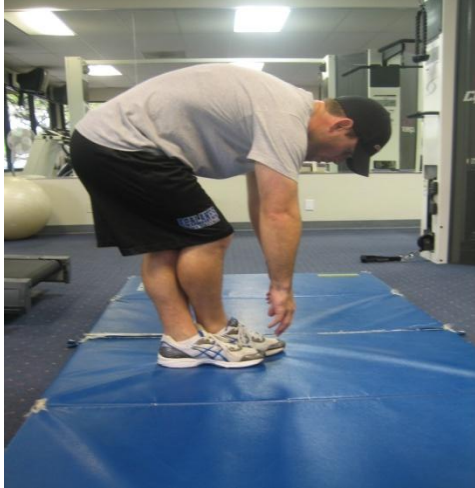
Repeat the above steps. This time, bend the knee while shifting your weight forward. Be sure to keep your heel on the ground.

You should feel the stretch from about ½ way down your calf into the Achilles Tendon and possibly into the sole of your foot.

This stretches the Soleus muscle, the muscle underneath the Gastroc. The Soleus originates on the upper portion of the Tibia and Fibula (lower leg bones) and inserts into the Achilles Tendon. The Soleus is responsible for plantarflexion (pointing the toes) and Supination of the foot (raising the arch).

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Plantar Fascitis • Achilles Tendonitis • Calf Tightness/Pain • Knee Pain • Tight Hamstrings • Low Back Pain • Posterior Leg Pain • Sacroiliac Pain • ITB Pain



### **Standing Hamstring Stretch (Right over Left and Left over Right)**

Stand with your right leg in front of the left leg. Lean forward from the hips, as if to touch your toes. You can keep a slight bend in the knees if you have tight hamstrings.

This stretch is primarily for the back leg. You should feel a stretch in the back of the thigh and possibly into the calf and sole of the foot. Switch leg position and repeat.

This stretches the hamstring muscle group, which consists of 3 muscles which originate on the pelvis and insert on the lower leg. The hamstrings are responsible for hip extension and knee flexion, and are commonly tight in individuals with low back pain.

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Plantar Fasciitis • Achilles Tendonitis • Calf Tightness/Pain • Knee Pain • Tight Hamstrings • Low Back Pain • Posterior Leg Pain • Sacroiliac Pain • Upper Back Pain • ITB Pain



### **Supine Hamstring Stretch**

Lay on your back and use a rope or towel to loop over the ball of your foot. Pull on rope until you feel a stretch in the back of the thigh and into the low back.

If you are unable to stretch very far, bend your knee slightly to increase your range of motion.

Repeat on other leg.

This stretch is another option for stretching the hamstring. Use whichever stretch feels better for you.

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Plantar Fasciitis • Achilles Tendonitis • Calf Tightness/Pain • Knee Pain • Tight Hamstrings • Low Back Pain • Posterior Leg Pain • Sacroiliac Pain • Upper Back Pain • ITB Pain



### **Glute/Low Back Stretch**

Lay on your back, using a towel or rope to put over the ball of your foot. Bend your knee and pull the foot and knee to your chest.

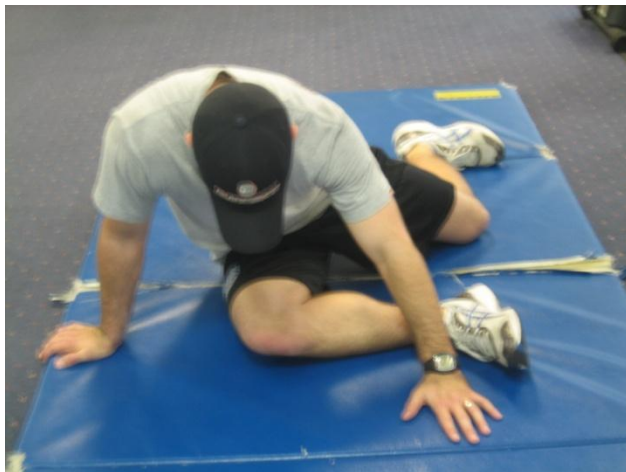
Stretch until you feel a stretch in the upper hamstrings, glute, and low back.

Repeat on other leg.

This stretch works on your Gluteus Maximus (butt muscle) which is responsible for extension of the hip. The Gluteus Maximus originates on the pelvis and inserts into the Iliotibial band, and the femur.

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Tight Hamstrings
- Low Back Pain
- Posterior Leg Pain
- Sacroiliac Pain
- Upper Back Pain
- ITB Pain
- Knee Pain



### **Piriformis/IT Band Stretch**

Sit with one leg in front of you with your front knee bent to 90°, and the other leg behind you with that knee also bent to 90°.

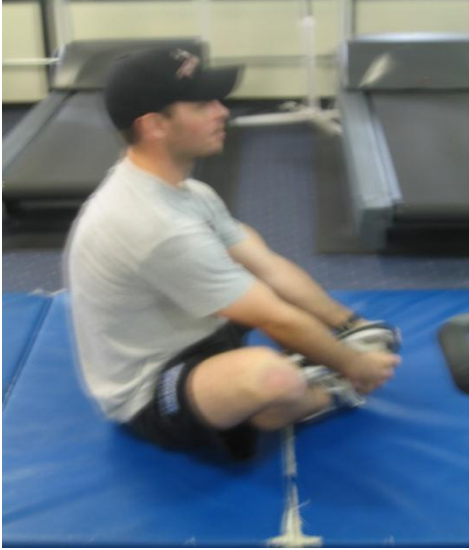
Lean forward until you feel a stretch in the side of your hip, outer thigh, and low back.

Repeat on other leg.

This stretch works on a small muscle called your Piriformis which originates on your pelvis and inserts into the head of the femur. It is responsible for external rotation and extension of the hip. This muscle also sits right on top of your Sciatic Nerve, and if tight, may contribute to Sciatica.

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Tight Hamstrings
- Low Back Pain
- Posterior Leg Pain
- Sacroiliac Pain
- Upper Back Pain
- ITB Pain
- Knee Pain



### **Seated Adductor (Inner Thigh) Stretch**

Sit with both knees flexed and soles of feet together. Grab feet with both hands and retract your shoulders while sticking out your chest.

To increase the intensity of the stretch, pull the feet toward the pelvis while maintaining good posture.

Do not bounce your knees during this stretch, but rather focus on retracting your shoulders and pushing pelvis towards feet.

The Adductor muscle group originates on the pelvis and attaches on the inner portion of the femur (thigh bone). This group acts to bring the legs in towards the midline, and acts as a major stabilizer while we walk, jog, or run.

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Tight Hamstrings
- Low Back Pain
- Posterior Leg Pain
- Sacroiliac Pain
- Upper Back Pain
- ITB Pain
- Knee Pain



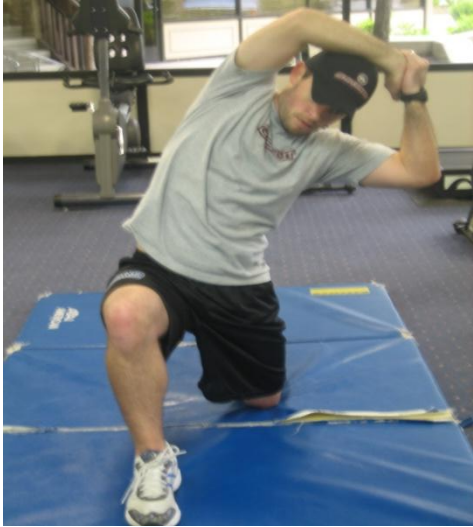
### **Quadriceps Stretch**

Get into a lunge position with your back knee on the floor. Reach back with your right arm and grab your right foot. Shoulders back, chest out, and extend your back hip.

This stretch can be challenging as far as the balance required to perform it. At first, try this stretch while positioning yourself next to a wall or stable object to hold.

The Quadriceps muscles consist of 3 muscles which originate on the Femur (thigh bone) and insert into the patellar tendon, acting to extend the knee. The 4<sup>th</sup> muscle, the Rectus Femoris, originates on the pelvis and inserts into the Patellar tendon. This muscle is responsible for flexing the hip and extending the knee. This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Low Back Pain
- Knee Pain
- Sacroiliac Pain
- ITB Pain



### **Lateral Hip, Oblique, and Lat Stretch**

In a lunge position, place your right leg forward and place your right forearm over your head. Grab the right wrist with the left hand and bend to the side. Try not to lean forward, but keep in a good postural alignment.

Imagine there is a string pulling straight out from your right hip, pulling that hip away from your upper body. Repeat with left leg forward and left arm over head.

This stretch helps to increase flexibility in the side of your torso, working on the upper portion of the IT Band, the Internal and External Obliques, Latissimus (Back Muscle), Triceps, and muscles on the side of the neck.

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Low Back Pain
- Knee Pain
- Sacroiliac Pain
- ITB Pain
- Upper Back Pain
- Rib Pain
- Shoulder Pain
- Neck Pain



### **McKenzie Press Up**

Begin face down on the mat. With your hands at your sides, slowly press up and raise your chest off the ground while maintaining your hips against the mat. Try to extend your entire spine, looking up towards the ceiling.

You may experience a stretching sensation in the abdominal region as well.

This is a great movement for people with low back pain. This move was developed as a physical therapy exercise designed to treat low back pain. If you experience sharp pain in the low back, back off and stay within a pain free range of motion.

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Tight Hamstrings
- Low Back Pain
- Posterior Leg Pain
- Sacroiliac Pain
- Sciatica



### **Cat Stretch (Position 1)**

From a position on your hands and knees, fully extend your entire spine from your tail bone to the top of your neck.

Think about extending each vertebra in your spine to it's maximum range of motion.

Slowly go from maximal extension to position 2.

The Cat Stretch is a controlled movement, going from complete spinal extension to complete spinal flexion. This is a great spinal warmup stretch to perform prior to athletic activity. It also can be very beneficial to those experiencing back pain.



### **Cat Stretch (Position 2)**

From position 1, slowly flex at each individual vertebral segment from the top of your neck to your tail bone.

Once at maximal flexion, slowly return to position 1. Repeat 3-5 times.

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Neck Pain
- Upper Back Pain
- Mid Back Pain
- Low Back Pain
- Sacroiliac Pain
- Sciatica
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### **IT Band Stretch**

Place your right foot behind your left and slightly point your right toe inward. Place most of your weight on the back foot.

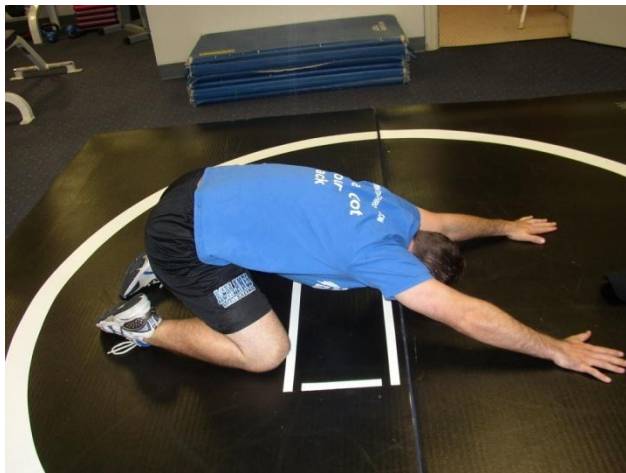
Push your hips out laterally, as if someone had a string tied to the hip of the back leg and was pulling out on it.

You should feel a stretch along the outside of your back leg from your hip down towards your knee.

The Iliotibial Band or Tract, is a very large tendon/ligament which extends from the top of your outer pelvis down the side of your leg and inserts on your tibia (shin bone), just below your knee. The ITB is responsible for stabilizing your legs during walking or running.

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Low Back Pain
- Knee Pain
- Sacroiliac Pain
- ITB Pain
- Shin Splints
- Tight Hamstrings



### **Latissimus Dorsi Stretch**

Sit on your heels and extend both arms over your head. Slowly lean forward at the hips and walk your fingertips forward on the mat.

Try to get your tailbone and fingertips as far apart as possible.

You should feel a stretch from your mid-back to each armpit.

The Latissimus Dorsi muscle originates in the thoraco-lumbar fascia, with connections to the pelvis, lumbar spine, lower thoracic spine and the lower 4 ribs. The Lats insert into the upper arm, and are responsible for internally rotating the shoulder and bringing the elbows towards the hips.

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Low Back Pain
- Mid Back Pain
- Rib Pain
- Shoulder Pain
- Neck Pain



### **Pectoralis Major (Chest) Stretch**

Place your palm at the edge of a door or other stable object at shoulder height. Keeping your arm straight, extend your shoulder and chest forward, turning away from the hand on the door frame.

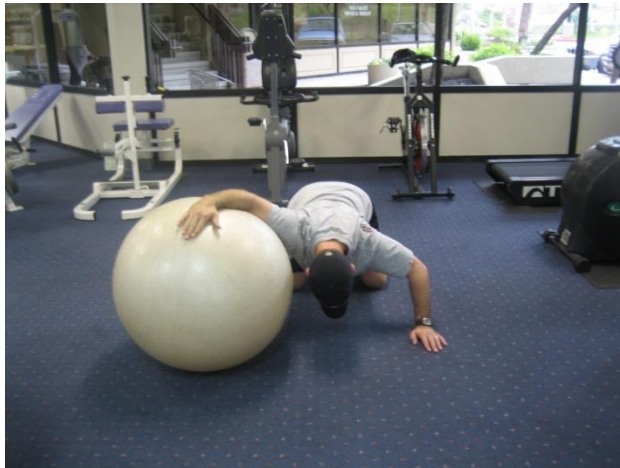
You should feel a stretch in the shoulder and chest muscles.

Repeat with other arm.

The Pectoralis Major muscle originates on the clavicle, sternum, and first four ribs. It inserts on your upper arm, and is responsible for internal rotation of the shoulder and bringing the arms together (adduction).

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Shoulder Pain
- Rotator Cuff Strain/Sprain
- Neck Pain
- Arm or Hand Pain or Numbness
- Mid Back Pain
- Rib Pain



### **Pectoralis Minor (Chest) Stretch**

Can be performed on a door frame, or with a stability ball. Bend elbow and place forearm on ball or door frame, with elbow at or above shoulder level.

Slowly extend your chest forward until you feel a stretch in your chest into your shoulder and upper arm. Repeat with other arm

The Pec Minor muscle originates on the 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> ribs and inserts on the front of the scapula (shoulder blade). This muscle is usually tight in people who sit in front of computers all day, rounded shoulders are a sign of a tight Pec Minor.

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Shoulder Pain
- Rotator Cuff Strain/Sprain
- Neck Pain
- Arm or Hand Pain or Numbness
- Mid Back Pain
- Rib Pain



### **Low Back/Hip Stretch**

Sit with your right leg crossed over your left. Keeping your left leg straight, twist so that your left elbow is against the outside of your right knee.

Chest out, shoulders back, and try to look over your right shoulder until you feel a stretch from the side of your hip into the low back.

Repeat on other side.

This stretch involves the thoraco-lumbar fascia, an area of soft tissue that connects your Latissimus Dorsi on one side to the Gluteus Maximus on the opposite side via the spine and pelvis. This stretch can be very beneficial to people with chronic low back pain.

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Low Back Pain
- Sacroiliac Pain
- Mid Back Pain
- Hip Pain
- IT Band Pain
- Sciatica



### **Rhomboid Stretch**

Bring your right arm across your chest, with your left arm, pull your right arm tight to your chest.

You should feel a stretch between your shoulder blades.

Repeat on other side.

The Rhomboid muscles originate on the upper thoracic spine and insert onto the medial border of the scapula. The Rhomboids are responsible for retraction of the shoulder blades.

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Shoulder Pain
- Neck Pain
- Upper Back Pain
- Rotator Cuff Sprain/Strain
- Rib Pain
- Arm or Hand Pain or Numbness
- Frozen Shoulder



### **Internal Shoulder Rotator Stretch**

Extend your right arm over your head, then bend your elbow and try to touch the top of the left shoulder blade. Once here, stick your chest out and try to stay in good posture.

You should feel a stretch in the shoulder, chest and possibly the neck.

Repeat on the other side.

By bringing your shoulder into a position of maximum external rotation, we stretch the internal rotators of the shoulder.

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Shoulder Pain
- Neck Pain
- Upper Back Pain
- Rotator Cuff Sprain/Strain
- Rib Pain
- Arm or Hand Pain or Numbness
- Frozen Shoulder



### **External Shoulder Rotator Stretch**

Bend your right elbow and place your right hand on your back, trying to touch the bottom of the left shoulder blade. Maintain good posture.

You should feel a stretch in your shoulder, upper arm, chest, and possibly the neck.

Repeat on the other side.

By bringing your shoulder into a position of maximum internal rotation, we stretch the external rotators of the shoulder.

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

- Shoulder Pain
- Neck Pain
- Upper Back Pain
- Rotator Cuff Sprain/Strain
- Rib Pain
- Arm or Hand Pain or Numbness
- Frozen Shoulder



### **Levator Scapulae Stretch**

Extend your right arm over your head, bend the elbow and reach toward the left shoulder blade. Now rotate your neck to the left and look over the left shoulder.

You should feel a stretch on the right side of the neck, from the shoulder blade up the side to the base of the skull.

Repeat on the other side.

The Levator Scapulae Muscle originates on the four uppermost cervical vertebra and insert on the superior angle of the shoulder blade. This muscle is involved in neck rotation and movement of the shoulder blade. The insertion of this muscle is a very common site for trigger points.

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

Tension Headaches • Neck Pain • Arm and Hand Pain or Numbness • Shoulder Pain • Rotator Cuff Strain/Sprain • Frozen Shoulder • Upper Back Pain •



### **Neck Side Flexion**

With your right hand, reach up and over the top of your head and gently pull your right ear toward your right shoulder.

You should feel a stretch in the left side of your neck and into your left shoulder.

Repeat on the other side.

This stretch is for a group of muscles that are located on the side of your neck, including your scalenes and upper trapezius. In people with neck and or arm pain and numbness, these muscles are often very tight. The nerves that feed your arm and hand travel between the muscles on the side of your neck.

Tension Headaches • Neck Pain • Arm and Hand Pain or Numbness • Shoulder Pain • Rotator Cuff Strain/Sprain • Frozen Shoulder • Upper Back Pain •



## **Neck Extensor Stretch**

Grab the top of your head with both hands so that your elbows are in front of your chest. Pull your head so that your chin tucks to your chest.

You should feel a stretch down both sides of the back of your neck. If you roll further forward, this stretch may be felt into the upper back.

This stretch works on the paraspinal muscles in your neck and upper back, as well as your sub-occipital muscles (the ones at the base of the skull).

This stretch is beneficial for people who experience:

Tension Headaches • Neck Pain • Arm and Hand Pain or Numbness • Shoulder Pain • Rotator Cuff Strain/Sprain • Frozen Shoulder • Upper Back Pain •