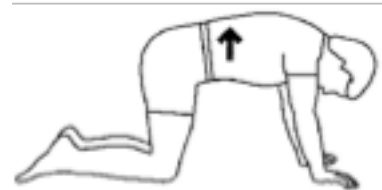
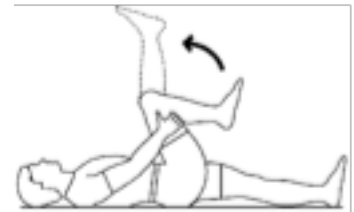


WHEENK! HEALTH

15 MINUTE BACK HEALTHY WORKOUT

THIS EASY ROUTINE, DONE THREE TO FIVE TIMES A WEEK, CAN MAKE YOUR BACK STRONGER, MORE FLEXIBLE, AND MORE RESISTANT TO INJURY. THIS WORKOUT WILL NOT HEAL SERIOUS SPINAL PROBLEMS OR REPLACE GOOD MEDICAL ADVICE. STRONG ABDOMINALS SUPPORT THE LOWER BACK TO KEEP YOU STRONG. ALSO, YOU CAN OFTEN QUICKLY RELIEVE A BACKACHE BY ALTERNATING A PELVIC TILT (PRESSING YOUR LOWER BACK INTO THE FLOOR WHILE LYING WITH YOUR KNEES BENT) WITH A PELVIC LIFT (RAISING YOUR HIPS A FEW INCHES OFF THE FLOOR WITHOUT ARCHING YOUR BACK).

1. **BACK RELAXATION:** LIE ON YOUR BACK, ON THE FLOOR WITH YOUR CALVES RESTING ON A CHAIR, KNEES AND HIPS BENT ABOUT 90 DEGREES. BREATHE SLOWLY AS YOU LIE STILL FOR SEVERAL MINUTES.
2. **HAMSTRING STRETCH:** IF OVERLY TIGHT, THE POWERFUL MUSCLES IN THE BACK OF THE THIGHS CAN PUT STRESS ON THE LOWER BACK. REACH FORWARD AND GRAB BEHIND YOUR KNEE (IF YOU CAN'T REACH, TRY USING A TOWEL AROUND THE LEG). RAISE YOUR LEFT FOOT SLOWLY TOWARDS THE CEILING. YOUR LEG DOESN'T NEED TO BE PERFECTLY STRAIGHT- A SLIGHT BEND AT THE KNEE IS FINE. HOLD THE POSITION FOR 30 SECONDS, LOWER YOUR LEG SLOWLY, AND REPEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE. COMPLETE THREE TO FIVE REPETITIONS WITH EACH LEG.
3. **KNEE-TO-CHEST:** USE THIS TO STRETCH THE HIPS AND LOWER BACK. LIE ON YOUR BACK WITH YOUR KNEES BENT. GRAB BEHIND YOUR LEFT KNEE WITH YOUR LEFT ARM AND SLOWLY PULL IT TO YOUR CHEST WHILE EXHALING AND KEEPING YOUR LOWER BACK IN CONTACT WITH THE FLOOR. HOLD THE STRETCH FOR UP TO TEN SECONDS, RELAX AND REPEAT FIVE TIMES.
4. **CAT STRETCH:** START ON YOUR HANDS AND KNEES AND SLOWLY ROUND YOUR BACK UPWARD INTO AN ARCH AS YOU EXHALE SOFTLY. PAUSE, THEN BREATHE IN AS YOU LOWER YOUR BACK TO THE STARTING POSITION. PAUSE, THEN SLOWLY LET YOUR BACK AND ABDOMEN SAG A FEW INCHES TO THE FLOOR AS YOU EXHALE. REPEAT FIVE TO TEN TIMES. THIS IS ALSO A GOOD OVERALL WARM-UP FOR THE ENTIRE BACK.



THESE EXERCISES SHOULD BE COMFORTABLE, NO PAIN SHOULD BE EXPERIENCED. IF PAIN IS PRESENT WITH THESE EXERCISES TRY TO BACK OFF THE STRETCH AND DON'T GO AS FAR. STAY SHORT OF PAIN OR DISCOMFORT AT ALL TIMES.

BY KRISTIN MASSAMIRI,
PHYSICAL THERAPIST



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Wheenk! Physical Therapy

949-498-8312
friends@wheenk.com
pt.wheenk.com