

Mindful movement

Start this exercise lying down on your back. Your hands are resting on the side next to your body. Take a moment to listen to your breathing. Notice how your breath makes your stomach rise and fall and explore how this feels. Also observe how it feels to lie there right now. How does your body feel against the floor? Where can you sense the feeling of pressure?

1. Stretching your whole body

When you are ready, bring your arms above your head and stretch your hands as far as possible. Extend your legs and push your heels as far as you can at the same time. Try extending your entire body as much as you can.

Keep breathing. Observe how the stretching feels. How do your arms, body, legs feel?

Release the stretch during the next exhalation. Notice how it feels when your muscles relax.

Return to the initial position, bring your hands back to the side of your body to rest. Observe how you felt after the last stretch. Observe the feelings in your body, whatever they may be.

2. Tilting the pelvis

When you are ready, bend your knees towards the ceiling and bring your heels closer to your buttocks.

Notice how your pelvis feels against the floor or bed in this position. Tilt your pelvis to arch your back. You can feel the arc and empty space formed under your back with your hand. Take a moment here and breathe. Notice how the position feels.

Then try tilting your pelvis in the other direction to make your back touch the floor or bed. The tail bone turns slightly up from the floor. Hold this position for a few moments.

Then tilt your pelvis back to arch your back slightly again.

Continue tilting your pelvis like this for a short time, back and forth, perhaps in time to the rhythm of your breathing.

When ready, return to the initial position.

3. Hugging the knees

Next, bring your knees up again. Lift your feet off the floor and hug your knees against your chest. You may wrap your arms around your legs or the back of your thighs. You can rock from side to side in this position, giving your back a little massage. Feel how this feels.

When ready, return to the initial position. Release your legs and let your legs straighten on the floor. Lower your head and shoulders onto the floor. Notice how your body feels right now.

4. Bringing one knee towards the chest

Then, lift your left knee, grab the back of your thigh or shinbone and pull your left knee towards your chest. Your knee will move as much as it can. You may then lift your head and shoulders slightly off the floor and see what happens. Notice how the stretching affects your breathing.



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When you are ready, lower your head and shoulders onto the floor and straighten your left leg onto the floor. Notice the sensations in your body after this stretch. You can also focus on any differences between your legs.

When you are ready, you can lift your right leg. Reach for your leg with your hands, grab the back of your thigh or shinbone and then pull your leg towards your chest. Pull gently, don't force the movement in any way. The purpose is not to compete with yourself. Try to let go of all expectations or hopes as to what things should be like. If you want, you can lift your head and shoulders off the floor towards your knee. When you are ready, lower your head and shoulders onto the floor and allow your right leg to straighten onto the floor.

You are back in your starting position. Arms to the side of your body on the floor, legs straight. Breathing. What sensations can you notice in your body here and now? Let your body be anything that it is as best you can.

5. Arching and rounding the back

When you are ready, turn over and get up on all fours. Place your hands directly below your shoulders and your knees below your hips. Keep your back straight. Your position should resemble a four-legged table. Take a moment here and breathe.

Exhale and round your back like you're a cat. Let your head hang between your shoulders. Inhale and lift your head and arch your back. Inhale and round your back and lower your head. Exhale and allow your back to return to a slight arch and lift your head. Notice what the motion feels like, what sensations you experience in your body at all times.

6. Extending the arm and the leg

Then return to the table position. Lift and straighten your left leg out behind you. Try to also lift your right arm, so your left leg straightens behind you and your right arm in front of you. You can look past the fingers of your right hand. Stay here for a moment and breathe. Observe how your muscles work to maintain balance.

When you are ready, bring your leg and arm back down. Then lift and extend your right leg back and left arm forward, look past the fingers of your left hand. Take a moment here and breathe. When you are ready, assume the table position again.

Then lie back down. Be present in your own body, allowing it to be anything that it is in the moment.

7. Hip bridge

Now that you are ready, bend your knees towards the ceiling and your heels towards your buttocks again. This time, bring your heels a little closer to your buttocks and open your legs. Bring your arms above your head and let them rest.

Lift your pelvis up so that your buttocks and lower back are raised off the floor. Support yourself on your heels and shoulders in a half bridge pose. There is plenty of room to breathe in this position, so breathe all the way to your stomach. Notice in particular the sensations in your thighs.



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If this feels too difficult, you can choose to listen to your body and lower your body when it feels good. When you are ready, lower your body. Extend your legs and bring your arms back to your sides. Notice the sensations left behind by the stretch.

8. Twisting the back

Bend your knees towards the ceiling again. This time, keep your legs closed. Put your arms over your head with your fingers crossed, your elbows open. Your head rests on your hands.

Let your knees fall to the left of your body. Your right knee may reach the floor or just move slightly over the centre line of the body. Breathe in this position. Then look in the opposite direction towards your right elbow.

Return to the centre. Then engage your abs and take your knees to the right of your body. At the same time, look to the left of your body.

Return to the centre so that the soles of your feet are against the floor and you are looking at the ceiling. Bring your hands back to the side of your body to rest.

As best you can, stay open to all sensations in your body that you can notice right now. They can be whatever they are. Try to be curious about them.

9. Lifting the leg up

Lift your left leg so that it points toward the ceiling. If your leg does not point toward the ceiling, wherever it ends up pointing is the right place for it right now. When your leg is in the air, notice the sensations in the leg and see which other parts of your body are involved in the movement. Are your hands or arms tense? Or maybe your face? If you notice any tension anywhere other than in your leg, try to relax these parts of your body as the movement only requires the muscles in the leg.

Then try to make a circle in the air with your leg. Imagine that you are holding a paint brush in your toes and painting a circle on the ceiling. First one way, then the other.

If you want to stretch more intensely, reach for your thigh with your hands and pull your leg a little higher or closer to yourself. But do not force it. If you want, you can lift your head and shoulders off the floor towards your knee. But if you don't want to do that, that's fine too.

When you are ready, return to the resting position. Lower your head and shoulders. Allow your left leg to extend and lower to the floor very slowly. Observe the feelings in your body when you return your leg towards the resting position. You may feel relieved or relaxed when the muscles in your leg relax. When your leg is extended on the floor, also straighten your right leg.

Take a moment to rest in this lying position and observe the post-stretch sensation in your body.

When you are ready, bend your knees towards the ceiling and your heels towards your buttocks again so that your feet are at hip width. Lift your right leg up in the air as high as you can. You do not need to push your limits, the body can be anything that it is in the moment. Move your leg in a circle first in one, then in the other direction.



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If you want to stretch more intensely, pull your leg higher or towards yourself with your hands. You can also lift your head and shoulders in the air if you want. Keep breathing and observing the sensations in your body.

When you are ready, lower your head and shoulders onto the floor. Then press your lower back towards the floor and engage your abs lightly. Slowly lower your right leg to the floor over the course of multiple breaths. When your leg reaches the floor, allow it to extend. Lie here breathing, observing how your leg feels on the floor. Notice how the floor now supports your leg for you.

10. Sideways leg lift

Turn onto your left side and support your head with your left hand. You may use your right hand as additional support to maintain balance to the front of your body.

Lift your right leg as high as you can. Notice how the muscles in your right thigh are working. Observe all of the sensations that this generates in your body. And breathe.

If the sensations are strong, examine what happens when you breathe. Ask yourself if you can maintain this position even if the sensations are strong. Examine how it feels to maintain the position, and if you want, you can lower your leg and lift it up again. When you are ready, you can slowly bring your right leg back down onto your left leg.

Turn onto your right side. Support your head with your right hand and place your left hand in front of your body to help maintain balance. Then lift your left leg up and notice the sensations in your left thigh muscles. Breathe into these sensations and let them be anything that they are. When you are ready, bring your left leg very slowly onto your right leg.

11. Leg lift lying on your stomach

Lie flat on your stomach. Turn your face to either side, it doesn't matter which. Let your body flatten onto the floor when exhaling.

When you are ready, lift your head so that it rests on your chin. Keep your hips on the floor and lift your right leg slightly. As you support your right leg in the air, notice the sensations in your body, which muscles are working when you support your leg.

When you are ready, lower your right leg and allow your head to rest facing to the side. Let your body relax and flatten onto the floor with each exhalation. When you are ready, lift your face and let it rest on your chin. Lift your left leg in the air. Keep your hips flat against the floor. You only need to keep your left leg a few centimetres above the floor. When you are ready, lower your leg and once again allow your face to rest facing either side, it doesn't matter which.

12. Lifting the upper body

Bring your chin to rest on the mat again. Then bring your legs together so that your toes and your heels touch each other. During the next inhalation, lift your upper body gently from the floor so that your face, shoulders, and chest are lifted off the floor. Do not use your arms in this movement; instead, use your back muscles. Lower your body back down during the next exhalation. Release the tension and let the muscles relax while you rest on the floor.



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13. Arching and rounding the back

Assume the table position once again on all fours with your hands below your shoulders and knees below your hips. As you exhale, round your back properly and let your head fall between your shoulders. Inhale and lift your head and arch your back. Observe how the stretching feels in your back. Repeat a few times. Exhale and round your back. Inhale and arch your back.

14. Final relaxation

Next, lie flat on your back. Now, during the last phase of this exercise, breathe and relax.

Lie with your arms next to your body, legs extended. Lie here and breathe. Be aware of the sensations throughout your body. Maybe you feel that you can be at home in your body. Let your body be anything that it is, lying and breathing in the moment.

Take this accepting, complete and present feeling with you when you end the exercise. Keep it in your life moment by moment.

YouTube video of the exercise

<https://youtu.be/hHfeT9Z49SY>



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