

Stretchers for healthy backs

BACK STRETCHES



General Osteopathic Council (GOsC)
Osteopathy House, 176 Tower Bridge Road, London SE1 3LU
Tel: 020 7357 6655 Fax: 020 7357 0011
Email: info@osteopathy.org.uk Website: www.osteopathy.org.uk



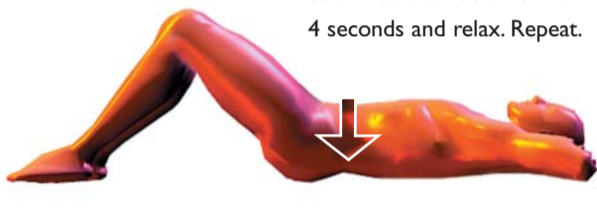
Osteopaths For Industry Ltd
56 High Street, Esher, Surrey KT10 9QY
Tel: 01372 477191 Fax: 01372 467647
Email: enquiries@ofi.co.uk Website: www.ofi.co.uk

The GOsC and OFI shall not be responsible for any injury arising from the performance of these stretches. Before attempting any of these illustrated stretches you must be in good health and if you have any doubt as to your medical condition please seek medical advice first.

BACK STRETCHES

6 Pelvic tilts

Position yourself as shown. Tighten your bottom and stomach muscles, trying to flatten the arch of your back into the floor. Hold for 4 seconds and relax. Repeat.



BACK STRETCHES

7 Seal curl

Relax on your stomach, flat on the floor. Place your hands behind your back, clench your buttocks and gently raise your head, shoulders and chest off the floor. Hold for 6 seconds, rest down and repeat. Now follow this with exercise 10.



BACK STRETCHES

8 Banana curl

Lie flat on your stomach, relaxed on the floor, with your arms rested forward. Gently clench your buttocks and raise your head, arms, chest and legs off the floor. Hold 6 seconds and then rest. Repeat. Now follow this with exercise 10.



BACK STRETCHES

9 Low back traction

Roll up a towel and place it on the floor. Gently lay over the towel as shown. You may lay backwards over it or roll on to it from the side. Lay in this position for up to 2 minutes and feel the back stretch. **Roll off to one side to leave this position.**



BACK STRETCHES

10 Back relax

Lie on your back with your lower legs raised on a chair with the knees bent as shown. Relax into this position for at least a minute.



Osteopathy – good health in good hands

For more information on Osteopathy,
or to find an Osteopath, contact:

Osteopathic Information Service

Tel: 020 7357 6655

Website: www.osteopathy.org.uk



General Osteopathic Council

Benefits of stretching

Stretching is a low impact method of exercise designed to increase flexibility and tone the muscles of the body. You do not have to be an athlete to enjoy the benefits of stretching.

Why Stretch?

- Improves flexibility
- Decreases the risk of injury
- Increases performance
- Addresses muscular imbalances
- Decreases physical stress
- Makes you feel better

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Introduction

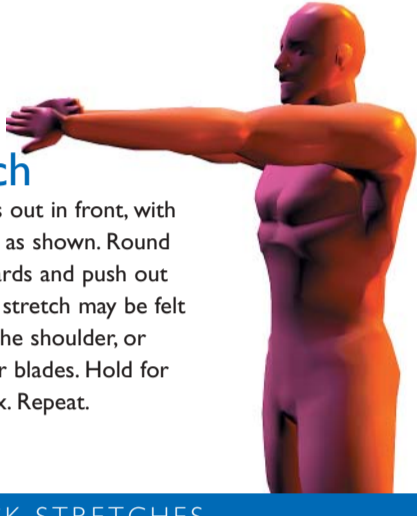
These stretches are designed to improve the condition of your back through gentle work to develop and tone the muscles in the area. You can do these exercises in any order, or follow the sequence suggested in this guide.

The exercises are designed to help and protect a healthy back. If you feel discomfort or are currently suffering a back problem then you may need professional medical advice or attention.

BACK STRETCHES

1 Mid back stretch

Stand with your arms out in front, with the fingers interlaced as shown. Round your shoulders forwards and push out with your hands. The stretch may be felt in the arms, back of the shoulder, or between the shoulder blades. Hold for 6-8 seconds and relax. Repeat.



BACK STRETCHES

2 Forward back stretch

Kneel down, sitting on your heels. Keeping your bottom on your heels, gently bend forwards so that the chest moves towards your thighs. Support your upper body with your arms on the floor. Relax into this position and feel the stretch. Stretch for up to 2 minutes, if comfortable, and sit up out of this position using your arms.



BACK STRETCHES

3 Single knee hugs

Lie flat on your back. Gently raise one knee up towards the chest and encourage the movement with your arms as shown. Hold for 6-8 seconds and relax. Swap to the other leg. Repeat. **Keep the head and neck relaxed during the stretch.**



BACK STRETCHES

4 Double knee hugs

Lie flat on your back. Gently raise both knees up towards the chest and encourage the movement with your arms as shown. Hold for 6-8 seconds and relax. Repeat. **Keep the head and neck relaxed during the stretch.**



BACK STRETCHES

5 Hip stretch

Lie on your back, bend one knee and guide it across your body as shown. Relax your body, including the head. Gently encourage the knee towards the floor and up the body.



Before you stretch

You should be in good health to conduct these simple stretches. If you are in any doubt, seek further advice before stretching.

How to stretch

Position yourself as illustrated in the diagram. Stretch smoothly and slowly until you feel the stretch in the desired muscle. Hold the stretch for 10-20 seconds, then release slowly. Do not force the stretch or bounce. If you feel any pain you should stop.