

Pregnancy Back Stretches

If you have lower back pain during pregnancy you may want to try stretching the muscles of your core and pelvis. A hormone called relaxin is released during pregnancy, which causes your ligaments and joints to stretch and expand in preparation for your growing baby and labour. It is important not to 'over-stretch' during this time and strain anything. A gentle, comfortable stretch that is not forced nor painful is perfect. Check with your doctor or physical therapist

first to ensure you have the green light to exercise and stretch. If you find these are too simple, your physical therapist can progress you on to more advanced or specific stretches for your problem; however, it is best to do that during a consultation with guidance rather than venturing off on your own. If, at any time, you feel pain or discomfort during or after exercise stop and speak to your doctor.

Spine Twist on Swiss Ball with Wrist and Finger Stretching

Adopt the sitting on a Swiss ball start position. Place the palms of your hands together forming a 'prayer' position, with your hands resting just in front of your breastbone. Setting your shoulder blades, inhale to prepare. Exhale as you rotate your mid back to one side allowing your head and neck to follow the same movement acting in one unit. Inhale to hold. Exhale as you rotate your spine back to the start position, keeping your head and neck following the rotation in one unit. Repeat. For a finger stretch, perform the exercise in the same way but with the palms apart and the fingers still pressed together. Keep your spine long and your lower back neutral. Avoid hunching your shoulders. If you don't have a ball at home sit on a chair/stool that maybe doesn't have back rest so you have room to rotate.



Hamstring Stretch In Forward Bend

Face a window sill or sturdy table or chair. Your feet should be positioned hip distance apart with your knees soft and your hands resting onto the table. Your spine should be lengthened and your lower abdominal muscles set. Slowly walk your legs away from the table or chair keeping your arms straight and spine lengthened so the bend comes from your hips instead of your spine. You should feel a stretch in the back of your thighs while you maintain a lengthened neck, spine and arm position with your abdominal muscles supporting your back. Hold the stretch for the required length of time, and then relax.



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Video:

<http://youtu.be/vmdgHDK6SI8>

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Video:

http://youtu.be/_TWk9QufCEw

Gluteal Stretch

Adopt the supine crook lying position. Bend your left hip and knee to allow your calf and ankle to lie on top of a Swiss ball. Place your right outer ankle and calf onto your top of your left thigh, turning your hip outwards in order to feel a stretch in your right buttock. Continue to breathe as you hold the stretch. Return to the start position and repeat on the other side. if you don't have a ball at home rest your foot up on a chair or the sofa.



Single Leg Stretch with Exercise Band

Adopt the supine crook lying start position. Float one leg into a table top position (90° at both the hip and knee joints). Loop an exercise band under the sole of this foot, holding the band in both hands with one end in each. Inhale to prepare, exhale as you extend your leg away from your body. Inhale as you allow your knee to return to the start position. Do not allow your arms to move.



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Video:

<http://youtu.be/kGaPfv8iCW4>

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Video:

<http://youtu.be/xM4q2F0eu0Q>

Yoga Kneeling Pelvic Release

(a) Kneel with your buttocks on or between your heels with your toes pointing inwards. Use a bolster cushion to sit on if this is too uncomfortable for your knees. Breathe deeply. Open your knees wide and release your lower back down towards your heels. This exercise helps to release tension in your groin, relaxes muscles in your lower back and pelvic floor, widening your pelvic outlet.

(b) Keeping your lower back grounded, straighten your upper back and relax your shoulders while you raise your arms above your head. On every exhalation release your tailbone down towards the floor.



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Video:

<http://youtu.be/qTtn0ikAH4k>

Yoga Back Release Knee Hugs

Lie on your back, gently hug your knees keeping your sacrum in contact with the floor to release your lower back. Hold for a few deep breaths. Take care if you are in your 2nd and 3rd trimester not to hold this exercise for too long and if you feel any dizziness roll over slowly onto your side and discontinue the exercise. if you struggle to get both legs hugged up together then do one side at a time.



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Video:

<http://youtu.be/XE2ptPOR-CQ>

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