

MAC Complementary Health Clinic


Stretches for legs to ease lower back pain



Free Leg exercise Booklet.

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Leg Stretching Techniques To Loosen Leg Muscles & Ease Low Back Pain

 The **leg stretching techniques** below limber the muscles and tendons at the backs of your legs. Regularly stretching your legs **relieves** and **prevents leg pain** and **lower back pain** and opens important energy channels from your spine to your feet.

Check with your health professional first before trying these exercises, especially if you have lower back pain or leg pain or you haven't exercised for some time. Also included below are links to additional exercises on this site to stretch and strengthen your legs.

Leg Stretch - Sitting

How

1. Sit on the floor or flat ground. Extend your left leg out straight, with your foot pointing up. Bend your right leg and rest your foot next to the inside of your left knee. Keep both legs as flat as possible. Place your right hand on your left thigh.



2. Breathe in through your nose. As you breathe out (through your nose) *slowly* and *gently* bend forward at the waist and (try to) touch and hold the toes of your straightened leg with your left hand. Stretch only as far as you *comfortably* can.

3. Take 3 slow, deep breaths in this position. Each time you exhale, though, stretch a little bit more. As you exhale for the final time, *slowly* and *gently* return to the upright sitting position. Take a slow, deep breath or two, then reverse the position and start stretching your right leg. Alternately stretch each leg several times.

Tips

Q Don't bend your neck too much; instead bend at the waist
Stretch slowly, gently & smoothly

Q Your leg muscles will be tighter in the morning so take extra care then

T *Stop* if you feel any pain - don't force it

Leg Stretch - Standing

How

1. Stand facing any object that's at least waist height and that you can place your foot on. Gently raise your left leg and put your heel on the object. Keep your hips and upper body facing front on. You can turn your right foot outwards a little for comfort. Rest your right hand on your left thigh.



2. Breathe in through your nose. As you exhale (through your nose) *slowly* and *gently* bend forward at the waist and try to touch and hold your toes on your left foot. Stretch only as far as you *comfortably* can. Take 3 slow, deep breaths in this position. Each time you exhale, though, stretch a little bit more. Feel your quadriceps muscles (backs of thighs) stretching and your calf muscles (backs of lower legs) stretching.

3. As you breath out for the final time, slowly raise your upper body to the upright starting position. Gently bring your left foot down off the object to the floor. Holding your left leg behind the knee helps as you do this. That completes one leg stretch. Repeat steps 1-3 with your right leg. Alternately stretch each leg several times, once or twice a day.

Tips

- Don't bend your neck too much; instead bend at the waist
- Stretch slowly, gently & smoothly
- Your leg muscles will be tighter in the morning so take extra care then

T *Stop* if you feel any pain - *never* force a stretch

Benefits of these Leg Stretching Techniques


Leg stretching techniques like the ones above are safe, simple *and* effective. Doing them regularly:

- Limbers the muscles & tendons at the backs of your legs
- Opens vital energy channels from your spine to your feet
- Relieves & prevents leg pain & lower back pain

For **more leg stretching techniques** try the ones below. While the above exercises stretch the backs of your legs, these ones stretch and strengthen the front and sides of your legs, especially your thighs.



The Lumbar Rub: A Simple, Effective Exercise For Lower Back Pain

 The **Lumbar Rub** is an excellent **exercise for lower back pain and stiffness** that also strengthens the kidneys.

The **kidneys**, according to traditional Chinese medical theory, are the most important organ in the body.

As the kidneys are located in the lower back region, lower back pain, especially of the chronic type, can reflect the health of your kidneys.

The Lumbar Rub **warms** and **stimulates** the muscles in the lower back and sacrum, which enhances **blood** and **energy flow**. This has a therapeutic effect on the kidneys and **eases** and **prevents pain** and **stiffness** in this area.

The Lumbar Rub is an extremely safe and easy exercise for the lower back. **Check with your health professional first** though before trying any new exercises, especially if you haven't exercised for some time.



Lumbar Rub - For Lower Back Pain & Stiffness

How

Can be done standing or sitting.

1. Stand with your feet parallel, about shoulder width apart.

Sink your weight down into your legs.

Or sit on the front edge of a firm chair.

Either take off your shirt or raise it so that your lower back is bare.

2. Rub your hands together briskly until they feel hot.

Immediately place them on your lower back either side of your spine, right hand on right side, left on left.

Rub up and down your lower back and sacrum with fairly firm strokes. Feel the heat building. **Alternatively**, clench loose fists and use the backs of your hands and knuckles to do the rubbing.

Continue for 1-2 minutes. If your hands or arms get sore, briefly stop - but leave your hands on your back to keep the heat in - then continue.

As soon as you've finished pull your shirt down to keep the area warm.

Benefits

- Warms & limbers the lower back & sacrum
- Enhances blood & energy circulation in the area
- (Strengthens the kidneys
- Relieves & prevents low back pain & stiffness

Tips

- Excellent therapy for acute & chronic lower back pain
- T Do it first thing in the morning and again at night
- T Add some liniment beforehand for greater pain relief

The **Lumbar Rub** is a **highly beneficial exercise for lower back pain** & pain prevention that can be used on its own or as part of your daily exercise routine or pre-sports warm up.

Exercises for Toning Stomach & Abs

🧘🧘 These exercises for toning stomach and abdominal muscles are simple to do, yet highly effective when done regularly. The first one **combines deep breathing with abdominal contractions to firm, tone and tighten your belly and abdominal area.**

Deep breathing increases oxygenation of your system, which boosts your metabolism, which helps with fat loss. When you breathe deeply *and* tighten your abs at the same time, the result is a powerful abs and tummy toning exercise. And, as you'll see below, there are other, equally worthwhile, benefits to doing deep breathing.

The first exercise specifically involves strong, rhythmic contractions of your abdominal muscles to forcefully empty your lungs of air. It's a classic breathing exercise to clean your lungs and airways and flood your system with fresh oxygen, and this alone makes it a highly worthwhile exercise, particularly if you smoke and/or live in a city. The bonus is that it *also* tones and tightens your abs and belly.

Exercises for Toning Stomach & Abs

How

1. Sit with your back straight and your hands on your knees.



2. Lean forward and forcefully exhale through your mouth to empty your lungs. This should make a loud whooshing sound (or wheezing sound if you're a smoker or have little lung power).



Squeeze and contract your abs as you push *all* the air out - keep your face relaxed though.

3. When your lungs are completely empty, relax your abs and inhale slowly and smoothly through your nose as you return to the upright starting position.

Fill your lungs to no more than 1/2 full. That's one round.

Immediately begin another round. Try and do 10 or 12 rounds the first time.

Build up to 3 sets of 25-30 rounds, morning, afternoon and evening.

Benefits

- Firms your belly & tones your abs
- Tones your nervous system - do it when you feel uptight or upset
- Enhances digestion - do it before meals
- Increases blood circulation
- Relaxes & energizes
- Keeps your lungs and airways clear</UL

Tips

- In between each round and after the last one, take several (or more) slow, deep breaths (through your nose) to balance your breathing again.
- At first you might cough, feel dizzy, see spots before your eyes and lose your breath. If so, stop, take some slow, deep breaths and try again. As your lungs become clearer and stronger it'll stop happening.
- **Try it standing** with hands on hips. As you exhale move your hips and pelvis forward and slightly curl your upper body and squeeze your abs as if doing a standing crunch. Relax as you inhale.