

Exercise Considerations

Consult with a physician before beginning the exercises in this book. A physician can determine which exercises are appropriate for you or your clients, and if any should be avoided or modified.

Disclaimer

This Flexibility Handbook is primarily an educational resource and is not intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of a physician. If you suspect you or your client has a health problem, please have him or her seek the services of a physician or healthcare professional.

Exercise is an ever-changing science. As new research and clinical experience broaden our knowledge, changes in exercise and exercise prescriptions are inevitable. The author has checked with sources believed to be reliable in her effort to provide information that is complete and generally in accord with the standards accepted at the time of publication. However, in view of the possibility of human error or changes in exercise science, neither the author nor any other party who has been involved in the preparation or publication of this work warrants that the information contained herein is in every respect accurate or complete, and they are not responsible for any errors or omissions or for the results obtained from the use of such information. Readers are encouraged to confirm the information contained herein with other sources.

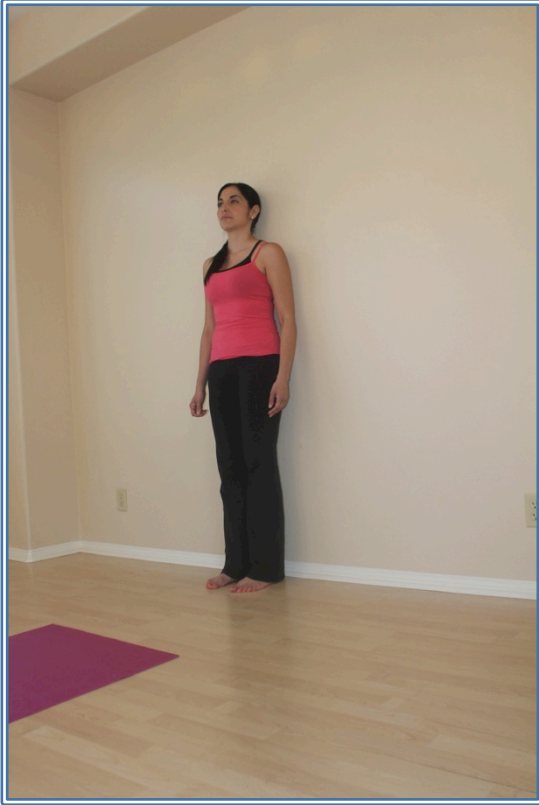
Please note: For your information and reference, I have included URLs and hyperlinks to web pages I've researched, relevant to the contents of this manual/guide/book. While I am unable to guarantee that these links will remain active, should you have any questions regarding my online research, please contact me directly.



Saw

- Sitting straight up.
- Legs straight shoulder width apart, feet flexed.
- Arms up at a "T" position
- Inhale rotate your torso, twisting at the waist to the right side.
- Exhale reach forward as your back arm, palm internally rotates and front palm reaches past the small toe.
- Inhale extend your spine and reach forward.
- Exhale reach forward and down again.
- Inhale come up in a diagonal line and rotate back to the center.
- Repeat on the other side.
- Make sure to keep your abdominals drawn in towards your belly button.

Side Note: *Keep in mind when rotating around your waistline you keep your heels firmly pressed down on the floor. As you twist keep your opposite hip down as you rotate to either side. This movement helps to increase your hamstring flexibility and allows your hip flexors to move in full range of motion.*



Roll Down

- Stand up against the wall, heels 2 inches away from the wall.
- Keep your head and shoulders pressed against the wall, and draw your rib cage down and pressed backed to the wall.
- Inhale as you lower your head and begin to peel your back off the wall, one vertebrae at a time. Make sure to keep your abdominals drawn in.
- You want to keep your chest as close as possible to your thighs, don't try to reach the floor. Your goal is keep your abdominals drawn in and up.
- Exhale at the bottom, take a deep inhale as you draw your abdominals in again and exhale as you restack your spine, one vertebrae at a time.
- Keep close attention that you do not allow your rib cage to thrust forward, keep your ribs drawn in and down towards your waistline.
- Depending on the tightness of your hamstrings and back you will want to repeat this movement five to ten times.

Side Note: This is a great exercise to do when your low back feels really tight or when you've been sitting in front of a computer all day long.



Kneeling Cat Stretch

- Begin by starting on all fours.
- Knees directly under the hips. (If being on the floor puts too much pressure on the knees, roll up your mat)
- Keep your wrist directly in line to your shoulders.
- You want to have your shoulders directly above your wrist
- If your shoulders are further back than your wrist it will create slight discomfort.
- Inhale, as you draw your shoulder blades together and down you back as you pull your belly button in towards your spine and engage your pelvic floor.
- Exhale, draw your tail bone down and pubic bone down and in as your upper back naturally curves.
- Inhale, repeat the movement – draw your shoulder blades together and down your back.
- Exhale, repeat the movement, draw your tail bone down and lift your pubic up towards your nose.
- Making sure to keep the deep abdominal muscles engaged (these are the transverse abdominals)
- The Transverse abdominals act as a corset around your abdominals and when strengthened with Pilates, low back is alleviated.

Side note: This movement is recommended as a daily routine. Can be done first thing in the morning if you have the tendency to wake up with a stiff back. This Pilates move will help open up your back and allow your body to move through its natural range of motion.



Hip-Flexor Cross-

- Lying on your back, pull both knees into your chest.
- Cross your right leg over your left leg.
- Placing your left ankle directly below your right knee.
- Place your right hand behind your right thigh and place your left arm through your legs and interlace your hands behind your right thigh.
- Keep your pelvis in neutral position and drawing your belly button in towards your spine.
- Inhale and as you exhale push your left elbow down against your left thigh.
- As you push your elbow down against your left thigh pull your hands towards you will behind your right thigh.
- You will feel your hip flexor and IT band (Illiotal Band), this is the muscle that runs along side the leg from the knee and inserts at the hip.
- Inhale release and exhale press your elbow down again.
- Repeat the same motion on the other side, you will want to uncross and cross again in the other direction.

Side Note: *If you experience low back pain, this exercise will help to relieve the tightness in the hip flexor and decrease the pain in the low back. Continued practice of this movement will increase the flexibility in the hip-flexor. This can be done every day. Especially if you just exercised or participated in any physical activity.*



Hamstring Press

- You will want to have a stretch band, exercise band or a thera-band to assist in this movement.
- Keep your pelvis neutral and square to the floor.
- Do not allow your hips to rock, keep them firmly pressed down to the floor, and engage your abdominals. Primarily your TA muscle (Transverse Abdominals) this is the deepest layer of your abdominals. The muscle lies between your belly button and pubic bone and acts as a corset to strengthen the abdominals and release unneeded pressure off your joints.
- Place the band behind your foot, pay close to attention to not allow the band to roll up. And, do not allow the band to roll off your foot, this will result in the band flying off and potentially hit you in the face. (Be Cautious)
- While keeping your left hip anchored to the floor, place your left foot in the band.
- Press your left heel up towards the ceiling, keeping your thigh muscle active.
- Do not hyperextend your knee or lock it out.
- Lengthen your leg by gradually tightening the thigh muscle right above your knee.
- You will want to inhale and exhale.
- Holding it there for 15 to 20 seconds.
- Repeat on the other side.

Side Note: This movement is simple to do everyday and will help to increase your flexibility in your hamstrings. When your leg is in the band make sure to not allow the leg to hang out and not work. Actively press your heel to the sky and at the same time press the hip down firmly to the floor.



IT Band Stretch

- You will want to grab a stretch band, an exercise band or a thera-band to assist you in completing this move.
- Keep your pelvis neutral and square to the floor.
- Do not allow your hips to rock, keep them firmly pressed down to the floor, and engage your abdominals. Primarily your TA muscle (Transverse Abdominals) this is the deepest layer of your abdominals. The muscle lies between your belly button and pubic bone and acts as a corset to strengthen the abdominals and release unneeded pressure off your joints.
- Place the band behind your foot, pay close to attention to not allow the band to roll up. And, do not allow the band to roll off your foot, this will result in the band flying off and potentially hit you in the face. (Be Cautious)
- While keeping your left hip anchored to the floor, place your left foot in the band.
- Keep your elbows down to each side of your body.
- Lower your big toe to the floor and pinky toe to the ceiling
- Do not hyperextend your knee or lock it out.
- Lengthen your leg by gradually tightening the thigh muscle right above your knee.
- Inhale and bring your leg across your body.
- You will want to inhale and exhale.
- Holding it there for 15 to 20 seconds.
- Repeat on the other side.
- You will feel an instant stretch along the side of your leg.

Side Note: Keep your opposite hip down as your leg crosses of your other leg. You will want to do this move as frequently as possible. You will feel a relief in your hip flexors and low back.



Hip Stretch

- You will want to grab a stretch band, an exercise band or a thera-band to assist you in completing this move.
- Keep your pelvis neutral and square to the floor.
- Do not allow your hips to rock, keep them firmly pressed down to the floor, and engage your abdominals. Primarily your TA muscle (Transverse Abdominals) this is the deepest layer of your abdominals. The muscle lies between your belly button and pubic bone and acts as a corset to strengthen the abdominals and release unneeded pressure off your joints.
- Place the band behind your foot, pay close to attention to not allow the band to roll up. And, do not allow the band to roll off your foot, this will result in the band flying off and potentially hit you in the face. (Be Cautious)
- While keeping your left hip anchored to the floor, place your left foot in the band.
- Lower your big toe to the floor and pinky toe to the ceiling
- Do not hyperextend your knee or lock it out.
- Lengthen your leg by gradually tightening the thigh muscle right above your knee.
- Inhale and bring your leg across your body.
- You will want to inhale and exhale.
- Holding it there for 15 to 20 seconds.
- Repeat on the other side.
- You will feel an instant stretch along the side of your leg.

Side Note: This movement will help to increase the flexibility of your inner thigh and help to increase your hamstring flexibility. Make sure to hold on to your band and keep your opposite hip down.



Hip Ultra Stretch

- You will want to grab a stretch band, an exercise band or a thera-band to assist you in completing this move.
- Keep your pelvis neutral and square to the floor.
- Do not allow your hips to rock, keep them firmly pressed down to the floor, and engage your abdominals. Primarily your TA muscle (Transverse Abdominals) this is the deepest layer of your abdominals. The muscle lies between your belly button and pubic bone and acts as a corset to strengthen the abdominals and release unneeded pressure off your joints.
- Place the band behind your foot, pay close to attention to not allow the band to roll up. And, do not allow the band to roll off your foot, this will result in the band flying off and potentially hit you in the face. (Be Cautious)
- While keeping your right hip anchored to the floor, place your left foot in the band.
- Do not hyperextend your knee or lock it out.
- Lengthen your leg by gradually tightening the thigh muscle right above your knee.
- Inhale and bring your leg out to the side of your body.
- Move your right elbow out and up as if you are holding a bow n'arrow, pull the band tight.
- You will want to inhale and exhale.
- Holding it there for 15 to 20 seconds.
- Repeat on the other side.
- You will feel an instant stretch along the side and in the inner thigh of your leg.

Side Note: When holding on to your band make sure to not hold a death grip on it, soften your hold and make your muscles hold and work. This movement will help to keep your inner thigh and hamstrings strong and lengthened.