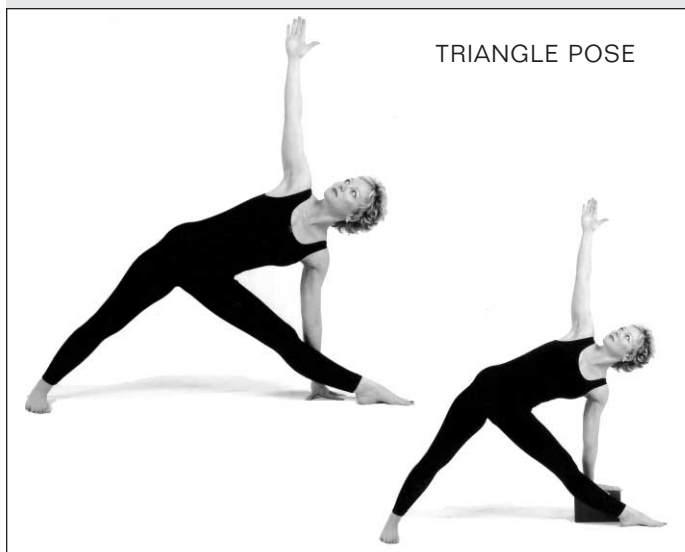


Back Pain

Did you know that problems in the lower back are the most frequent cause of lost workdays in adults under the age of 45 or that eighty percent of Americans suffer from back pain? Back injuries send more people to the doctor than any other ailment except the common cold.

The best time to treat back pain is before it begins. A consistent plan of regular stretching is your best bet to minimize future pain. Regular practice of the following yoga poses helps minimize the effects that stress, poor posture, tight hips and hamstrings can have on back pain.



Triangle Pose

Utthita Trikonasana

15 to 45 seconds

Props

✓ One Block

Instructions:

1. Stand in Mountain Pose. Distribute your weight equally on both legs. Breathe evenly.
2. Extend your arms out to the side and then take a wide stride so that your feet are directly under your fingertips.
3. Turn your left foot slightly in. Turn in your right foot so that your big toe points directly to the right.
4. Exhale and bend your torso sideways to the left so that the weight of your body is moving into your back heel. Place your left hand on a block. Raise your right arm up toward the ceiling in line with your shoulders and left arm. Gaze upward at your right thumb. Stay in the posture for 15 to 45 seconds breathing evenly.
5. To come out of the posture, inhale and come up. Turn your feet to face forward. Repeat the posture on the opposite side.

Yoga Solutions

Triangle Pose Utthita Trikonasana

Warrior Pose II Virabhadrasana

Warrior Pose I

Extended Leg Pose Prasarita Padottanasana

Reclined Leg Stretch Supta Padangusthasana

Reclined Cobbler's Pose Supta Baddha Konasana

Relaxation Pose Savasana



Warrior Pose II

Virabhadrasana 2

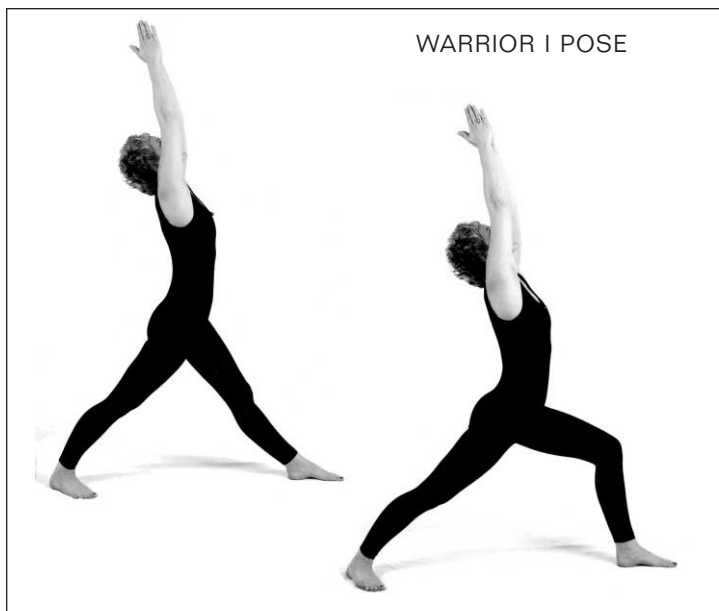
15 to 30 seconds

Instructions:

1. Stand in Mountain Pose. Extend your arms out to the side and take a wide stride, so your feet are directly under your fingertips.
2. Turn your left foot slightly in. Turn your right foot out so that your big toe points directly to the right.
3. Draw an imaginary line down the center of your torso. Keep your awareness of this line as you exhale and bend your front knee, pressing both outer heels into the ground. Turn your head to the right. Hold the posture for 15 to 30 seconds, breathing evenly.
4. To release, straighten your right leg. Turn your feet so that they face forward. Repeat this posture on the opposite side.

Modification: If you tire quickly, practice with your hands on your waist until your strength and stamina increase.

Back Pain



WARRIOR I POSE

Warrior I Pose

Virabhadrasana I

15 to 30 seconds

Props

✓ Wall

Instructions:

1. Stand in Mountain Pose. Extend your arms out to the side and then take a wide stride, so your feet are directly under your fingertips.
2. Turn your wrists until your palms face the ceiling. Raise your arms over your head until they are parallel to each other.
3. Turn your left foot in 45 degrees and your right foot out 90 degrees. Turn your pelvis and chest so they now face in the same direction of your right leg.
4. Bend your right knee. Extend from the back buttock through the back heel. The calf and thigh should form a right angle. Lengthen the front of the spine as you reach through the arms and the fingertips. Breathe evenly and stay in the posture for 15 to 30 seconds.

Modifications: If bending your knee causes discomfort in your lower back, or if you cannot turn your torso so your hips come level, narrow your stance and practice with your back heel against a wall. If raising your arms overhead brings excessive tension to your shoulders, do not lift your arms overhead. Instead, stretch your arms out to the sides or place your hands on your hips.

Extended Leg Pose

Prasarita Padottanasana

30 seconds to 1 minute

Props

✓ Chair

✓ Two blocks

Instructions:

1. Place the back of a chair against a wall. Stand about three feet away facing the chair seat. Spread your feet four feet apart, feet parallel, toes pointing forward. Place your hands on your hips. Lift both kneecaps.
2. Exhale and bend forward from your hips, stretching your arms out in front of you. Place your hands flat on the chair seat. Look up as you bend to ensure that your back is concave. Lift your buttock bones towards the ceiling as you press your heels into the floor. Hold for 30 seconds to one minute, breathing evenly.
3. To come up, place your hands on your hips. Inhale and raise your trunk. Step your feet together.

Modifications:

If you are more flexible, place two blocks in front of you, so that they are under your shoulders when you bend forward. As you become even more flexible, practice removing the blocks and working with your hands on the floor.

EXTENDED LEG POSE



Back Pain

Reclined Leg Stretch

Supta Padangusthasana

20 seconds to 1 minute

Props

✓ Strap

Instructions:

1. Lie on your back with your legs straight. Bend your right leg and bring the knee to your chest. Hold your right big toe with your right hand or loop a strap around the sole of the right foot if you cannot reach your toe. Hold one end of the strap in each hand. Press your left thigh strongly down into the ground.
2. Inhale and raise the right leg straight up. Keep the toes of both feet drawn towards the ankles. Stay for 20 seconds, breathing evenly. With practice, increase the time to 1 minute.
3. Lower the right leg to the floor and repeat on the opposite side.

Reclined Cobbler's Pose

Supta Baddha Konasana

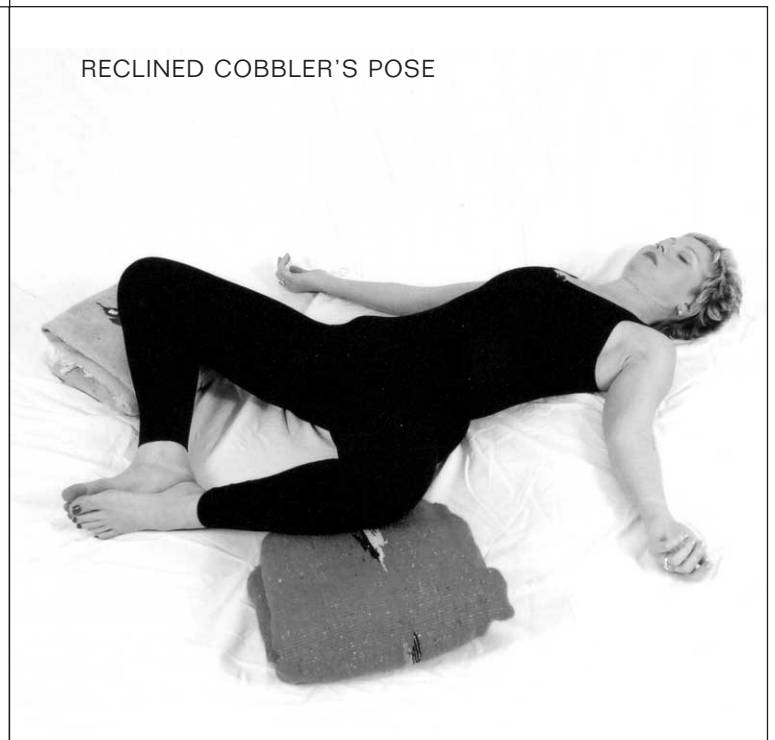
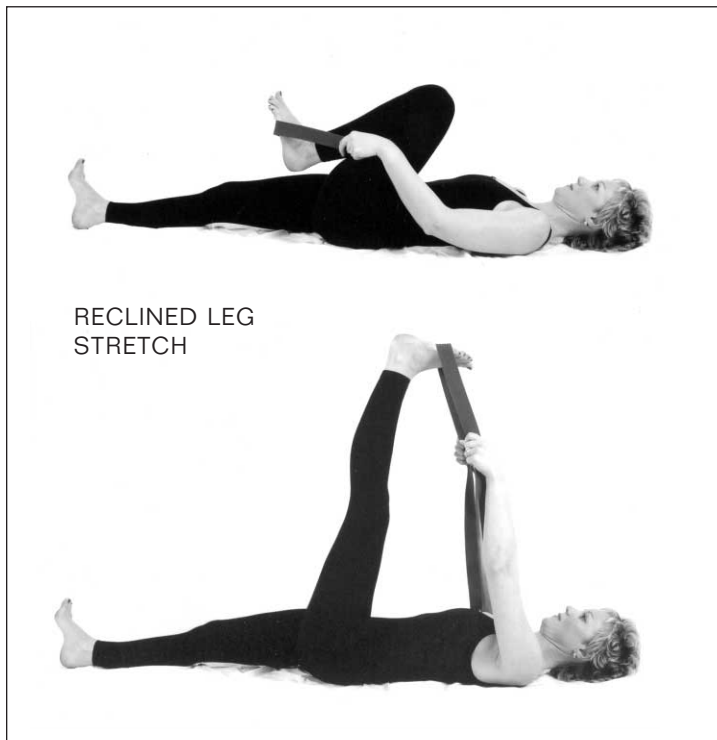
1 to 5 minutes

Props

✓ Two blocks or two blankets

Instructions:

1. Start by lying on your back with your legs bent and the soles of your feet on the ground close to your hips. Drop your legs open so the soles of your feet come together. Position your arms on the ground so that your hands are six to eight inches from your sides, palms facing upward. Relax.
 2. Stay in the posture for one minute initially, breathing evenly. With practice increase the time in the pose to 5 minutes.
- Modification:**
If you feel strain in the groin, support the thighs with blocks or blankets.



Back Pain

Relaxation Pose

Savasana

2 to 10 minutes

Props

✓ Blanket

Instructions:

1. Lie on your back with knees bent. Straighten your legs about one foot apart and allow them to drop gently out to the sides. (If lying flat is uncomfortable, keep the knees bent at a right angle and/or place a rolled blanket behind your knees.) Place your hands about eight inches away from your sides, palms facing upward.

2. Observe how your body is making contact with the floor. Is the weight distributed evenly between the right heel and the left? The right and left buttock? The right shoulder and the left shoulder? Is the weight centered evenly on the back of your head? If not, make any adjustments necessary. Draw your shoulders down and away from your ears.

3. Close your eyes. Keep your breathing smooth and free of tension. Let your eyeballs relax into their sockets and allow everything around you to recede. Relax your jaw, the corners of your mouth, your throat. Let go completely. Stay in the posture for 2 to 10 minutes.

4. When you feel ready, slowly open your eyes. Move out of Relaxation Pose slowly. Take a few deep breaths. To come up, roll onto your right side and stay for a moment. Then slowly move to a sitting position before standing up.

