

Seated Cat Stretch

Like all somatic exercises, do these movements slowly, gently, and with maximum awareness.

Basic position: Sit with your sit bones close to the edge of a sturdy chair with your legs slightly wider apart than your hips. Your feet should be flat on the floor. Sit comfortably erect.

1. **Arch and Flatten**—Inhale and arch your lower back, rocking forward on your sit bones, then exhale and gradually relax the back and pelvis. Continue exhaling and flatten your back, contracting the belly and rocking back on your sit bones. Gradually relax the belly and return to the relaxed, erect starting position. Take an easy breath before starting the next one.
2. **Arch and Curl**—Basic position plus hands interlaced behind your head
Inhale and arch your lower back while pressing your elbows back and shoulder blades together, rocking forward on your sit bones, then exhale and gradually relax the back and pelvis. Continue exhaling and flatten your back while pointing your elbows towards the knees or each other, contracting the belly and rocking back on your sit bones. Gradually relax the belly and return to the relaxed, erect starting position. Take an easy breath before starting the next one. The last time, slowly let your arms and shoulders relax down.
3. **Diagonal Airplane**—Basic position plus described modifications
 - a. Head turned right, right fingers touching your right cheek, elbow out to the side; left arm down by your left side, left foot a little forward of the right foot. Inhale and press down into the left foot while pressing back with the right hand and elbow, feeling the diagonal contraction across your back. Exhale slowly while returning to neutral, letting the arm slowly come down by your side. Relax completely and take a breath. Repeat
 - b. Head turned left, left fingers touching your left cheek, elbow out to the side; right arm down by your right side, right foot a little forward of the left foot. Inhale and press down into the right foot while pressing back with the left hand and elbow, feeling the diagonal contraction across your back. Exhale slowly while returning to neutral, letting the arm slowly come down by your side. Relax completely and take a breath.
4. **Arch and Diagonal Curl**—Basic position plus described modifications
 - a. Right hand behind your head. Inhale and arch your lower back while pressing your right elbow back, rocking forward on your sit bones, then exhale and gradually relax the back and pelvis. Continue exhaling and point your elbows towards the left knee, contracting the belly and rocking back on your sit bones. If desired, raise the left knee toward the elbow. Gradually relax the belly and return to the relaxed, erect starting position. Take an easy breath before starting the next one. The last time, slowly let your arms and shoulders relax down (or do this between each repetition).
 - b. Do the same movement with the left hand behind the head.

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5. **Twist**—Put feet close together and sit right on the edge of the chair. Arms can be straight out from the shoulder joint, down by your side, or somewhere in between.

Move your knees to one side while turning your head to the opposite direction. Simultaneously, externally rotate the arm you're looking toward (palm rolls upward) and internally rotate the other arm (palm rolls downward). See if you can do this arm movement from the shoulder blades. Slowly bring the knees and head to the other side and reverse the arms.

6. **Inversion/Eversion**—Basic position

- a. With your Right leg extended out a bit more than your left, pull your Right foot toward you and invert your right foot, turning the sole of the foot inward, and press out with your right knee (your foot can stay on the floor or come off the floor). At the same time, turn your head Left and let the Left side of your back arch. Return to your starting position. Then evert the Right foot, turning the sole of the foot outward, and press inward with your Right knee (foot can be on the floor or raised off the floor). At the same time, turn your head Right and let the Right side of your back arch. Return to your starting position. Do several sets with the Right leg.
- b. Do several sets of the same movement with the Left foot/leg.
- c. Invert both feet at the same time, pulling the soles of your feet together and toward the chair a little and feeling your back arch, then relax and return to your starting position. Then, evert both feet at the same time, pulling your feet towards the sides of the chair and your knees together, feeling your back flatten a little, Do several sets of inversions/eversions.
- d. Start with your feet extended in front of you a little and your knees and ankles right together. The knees and ankles should remain touching each other during this whole movement. Invert the Right foot and evert the Left foot at the same time, turning your head in the same direction as the soles of your feet. Return to your starting position, then invert the Left foot and evert the Right foot at the same time, turning your head in the same direction as the soles of your feet. Return to the starting position. Do this several times.

7. **Shoulder Rotations**—Sitting

- a. Move your pelvis a little to the Right on the chair and put your Left hand on the edge of the chair for support. With your Right hand on your Left shoulder, rotate your trunk, neck, and eyes to your comfortable far Left 3 times. Let your Right hip lift and lower as you rotate.
- b. At the far Left rotation, hold your trunk motionless and turn just your head and eyes to the Right and back 3 times.
- c. At the far Left rotation, put both hands on the chair (or put your Right hand on your Left thigh) and turn just your head and eyes back to the Right. Starting there, simultaneously turn your head/eyes and your shoulders/trunk in opposite directions 3 times.
- d. Bring both head/eyes and shoulders/trunk to the far Left rotation and lift your chin to the ceiling while moving your eyes toward the floor. Gradually lift your eyes while moving your chin downward. Move your head and eyes in opposite directions 3 times.
- e. Repeat steps a – d on the other side.

Other Seated Exercises

1. **Shoulder Raises**—Great for relaxing tense shoulders! Sit as for Arch & Flatten, arms hanging loosely by your sides

Very slowly raise one shoulder toward your ear. Then extremely slowly, lower your shoulder, continually asking yourself how far it can relax down (allow yourself to be surprised!). Repeat several times. Do the same for the other shoulder, then do the same with both shoulders.

2. **Alternating Green Light/Red Light**—Great for coming back to an easy, balanced and erect posture! Sit as for Arch & Flatten or stand, arms hanging loosely by your sides

As you inhale, contract the muscles of your back, including the neck and the buttocks. Your thighs might want to turn out a bit and your head will tilt back a little. Let the arms externally rotate so that your shoulder blades come together more. As you exhale, gradually come out of this full body extension (Green Light posture), through, neutral, then forward into flexion (Red Light posture). Your head is forward, shoulders rounded forward and belly contracted. Thighs might also want to pull inward a little. As you inhale, gradually go through neutral and back into Green Light, but a little less than before. As you exhale, gradually go through neutral and back into Red Light, but a little less. Slowly go back and forth, making your movements smaller and smaller, till after the last Green Light, you easily relax into a neutral posture.