Spinal Mobility and Stability Training

* Please consult your physician before starting an exercise program.

Circuit for Spinal Mobility and Stability

Repeat these four exercises without a break, then rest 30 seconds before repeating them again. You can use this circuit at the beginning or end of a longer workout. Or use the circuit first thing in the morning to maintain spinal health.

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<td><u>Cat/Cow</u>
1) Kneel with your knees and your feet hip width apart. Hands are placed directly under shoulders.
2) Begin with spine in a neutral position, abdominals engaged to avoid arching or sagging. Take a deep breath in.
3) To do the Cat, exhale very slowly while contracting your abdominal muscles and arching your back toward the ceiling, allowing the pelvis and the head to follow the line of the arch. May be held up to 15 seconds.
4) Now do the Cow by relaxing and letting the body slowly give into gravity, allowing the shoulder blades to sag together, the belly to drop, and the lower back to arch. The head and the tail should be slightly lifted upward. Breathe in before repeating 3) and 4). Repeat 8 – 10 times in total.</td>
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<td><u>Bird Dog</u>
1) Begin on your hands and knees, with shoulders and hips parallel to the floor.
2) Slowly raise the right arm while simultaneously extending the left leg. The shoulders and the hips MUST remain parallel to the floor; the body must not tilt to the side.
3) Return the arm and leg to the beginning position and repeat with the other arm and leg
4) Repeat both sides 8 – 12 times.</td>
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	Lumbar crunches 1) Lie down face up. Extend one leg out and bend the other leg at the knee, with foot flat on the floor. Note that there is a natural curve in the lower spine; this curve must be maintained throughout the exercise. 2) Cross one arm on the chest and place the other hand in the curve of the lower back. Take a deep breath in. 3) Exhale slowly and raise your shoulder blades off the floor, moving the upper torso. Pause while continuing to exhale. 4) Slowly return to beginning position. Repeat 8-10 times with one leg bent, and then repeat all repetitions with the other leg bent.
	Glute bridge 1) Lie face down on a mat with the knees bent, feet flat on floor and hip width apart, and the hands by the hips. Tighten your lower ab muscles; try to keep these muscles engaged throughout the entire exercise. 2) Gently exhale and slowly push hips up off the floor by contracting the glutes while pressing the heels into the floor. Avoid hyperextending (overarching) the lower back. Hold the top position for one count. 3) Inhale and slowly lower the pelvis back to the floor. 4) Repeat 8-12 times.

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