

STRETCH SESSION 3

Spine

Reminder: the 4 S's: stop, straighten up, step away and stretch. Today's stretches are for the spine.

The spine moves in 6 different ways and has a resting pose (mountain pose). In mountain pose the alignment is ear over shoulder over hip over knee over ankle with feet hip distance apart.

6 different directions:

- Inhale, lengthen, exhale, twist from hips, toward the right, looking out over right shoulder. Inhale, lengthen, exhale, come back to center. Repeat on the other side (left). Do 3 times each direction.
- Move side to side, bringing spine into "C" curve. Inhale, lengthen, taking left arm straight up. Exhale, right hand slides down outside of right leg, curve spine towards right. Left arm comes up over the head, shoulder is back and in line with the ear. Stretch directly to the side, do not roll forward. Inhale, lengthen, exhale, come back up to center. Repeat on other side. Do 3 times each side.
- Forward bend, going halfway to flat back or table. Use a prop (table, chair, wall). Face the prop. Inhale, lengthen, exhale, letting arms go out in front stretching along the tabletop until body is approximately parallel to the floor with back flat. Push hips away from shoulders feeling stretch along the length of the body. Release by walking hands back toward the body until you are standing straight up.
- Back bend (counterpose to forward bend). Standing, put hands or fists on back approximately where kidneys are. Inhale, lengthen, exhale, gently lean back, hips moving forward to rest lightly against table if you are still standing near the prop from forward bend. Arch spine, letting head drop back. **CAUTION:** if this is not good for your neck, keep the chin tucked into the chest. Inhale, come back to standing and relax.