



June 2020
BACK HEALTH CHALLENGE

YOGA MOVES REFERENCE SHEET

Aim for 8 to 12 repetitions of each move. If you can't do that many at first, start with fewer and build up gradually over time.

1. Cat-cow Warmup - Loosen the joints of the spine and restore flexibility to the spinal muscles and ligaments.

- Start on all fours, hands and knees on the floor. Knees are hip-width apart. Hands are below your shoulders, with the elbows straight but not locked. Look down at the floor.
- As you exhale, let your head move toward your chest while rounding your back like a cat (spine toward ceiling). Hold for 10 seconds.
- As you inhale, let your stomach move toward the floor (arching your lower back). Allow your shoulder blades to move together. Hold for 10 seconds.
- Alternate between the two positions.



2. Bird dog - Good for the upper and lower back and hamstrings. Be sure to warm up first.

- Start on all fours, hands and knees on floor.
- Extend one leg and the opposite arm so that they are parallel to the floor. Hold this position for seven or eight seconds. Then repeat with the opposite arm and leg.
- Alternate between the two positions.





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3. Pelvic tilt - To strengthen your lower back — Do it on the floor or a firm surface.

- Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor. Leave a space between the small of your back and the floor.
- Tighten your abdominal muscles so that the small of your back presses flat against the floor. Hold this position for five or six seconds. Then relax, allowing a space again between the small of your back and the floor.
- Alternate between the two positions.



4. Abdominal contractions - Build abdominal muscles, which support and protect the lower back.

- Lie on your back with knees bent, feet flat on the floor. Rest your hands on your belly below the ribs.
- Tighten your abdominal muscles while pulling the abdomen in and down. Continue to breathe while holding the contraction for five seconds.
- Release and repeat.

