

Spinal and lower limb stretches

These exercises are design to facilitate and restore spinal movement. They are a progressive programme, working up to more challenging exercises. Hold the stretch for as long as you feel comfortable, gradually increasing times and repetitions, as your flexibility and stamina improve. Following your recovery, continue the exercises 2-3 times per week, to maintain flexibility. This will help to reduce the risk of re-injury.

Remember: Work pain free. A little 'stretch' is to be expected, but any sensation you experience should ease within 20 minutes of completing the exercise. If this is not the case, perform less repetitions or hold for a shorter duration.

Early Phase (0-3 weeks post surgery)



Knee rolls

Lying on your back with your knees bent, place your arms out to the side, level with your shoulders and palms turned upwards.

Slowly roll your knees to the right, trying to keep your knees and ankles together.

Repeat x6 times each side, hold the stretch for as long as is comfortable for you.



Knee Hugs

Lay on your back.

Bend the leg to be stretched towards your chest holding onto the knee with both arms.

Pull your knee towards your chin keeping your head on the floor. You should feel a stretch in the buttock.

Hold for about 20 seconds. Repeat x6 - 10 times.

Mid Phase (3-6 weeks post surgery)



Hamstring stretch

Lying on your back, bring your knee towards your chest so your hip is at 90°.

Place your hands around your thigh; straighten your leg towards the ceiling until you feel a comfortable stretch in the back of the thigh.

Hold up to 30 seconds, repeat x3 – 5 times on both legs.



Piriformis stretch

Lying on your back with your knees bent. Cross your ankle of the leg to be stretched over the other knee.

Place your arms around your thigh as demonstrated. Bring your thigh towards your stomach. Feel the stretch in your buttock. You may wish to loop a towel around the leg, to assist in the upwards pull

Hold up to 30 seconds repeat x 3 – 5 times each leg.

Late Phase (>6 weeks post surgery)



The Cat

Position yourself on all fours.

Arch your spine up towards the ceiling, tucking your bottom under whilst allowing your head to relax between your arms.

Next hollow out the small of your back lifting your head look forward, keep your arms straight. Gently push your bottom out.
Repeat x6 -10 times.



Press up

Lying face down, leaning on your elbow/forearms.

Arch the small of your back.

Keep your knees and shoulders relaxed.

Repeat x6 –10 hold for 4 -6 seconds.

Late Phase (>6 weeks post surgery)



Extension control

Position yourself on all fours.

Lift your opposite arm and leg into a horizontal position. Hold for 5 -10 seconds. Try to keep your body still.

Repeat on the other side.

Repeat x6 -10 times



Sitting on Knees

Stretch your arms out in front of you and sit back onto your heels.

Try to get your head as close to your knee as possible.

Repeat x6 -10 times. hold the stretch for as long as you feel comfortable.



Bridging

Lay on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.

Lift your bottom off the floor and raise your stomach up towards the ceiling.

Hold the position. Gently lower down returning to the starting position. Only work in a pain free range. Repeat x6 -10 times.