

Cobra Stretch

This stretch is a good counterbalance move against all the slouching forward most of us do throughout the day.

Target Muscles: Abdominal muscles, front of hips

Action Desired: Extension of the lumbar spine, stretching of the intercostal muscles (the ones between the ribs), and decompression of lumbar spine.

Steps

1) Starting Phase: Lie on your belly with your hands positioned directly under your shoulders and fingers facing forward. Legs should be straight and toes pointed. (Fig.1)

2) Upward Phase: Engage your abdominal/core muscles to support the spine. Press into your forearms to lift your chest up. Press your hips into the floor. Lengthen the torso and curl your chest away from the ground while keeping your hips down. Keep the shoulders rolling down and back (Fig.2). Hold this position for 15 - 30 seconds. You may be able to extend fully onto your hands (Fig. 3) or you may remain on your forearms.

3) Downward Phase: Gently lower your upper body back to the mat or floor.

4) Rest in starting phase 3-5 seconds. Repeat.

Note: This exercise should be balanced with a Child's Pose or forward bend (Fig.4). Be sure to keep the movements slow and controlled.

Repetitions: Perform 10 reps one to two times a day.



* If these movements cause any pain or discomfort, please consult with your chiropractor.