

### **Cat/Cow**

A wonderful, balanced exercise for the back. Cat/Cow is both a flexion (cat), and an extension (cow) exercise. It tones and stretches the abdominal muscles, develops flexibility in the spine, and is one of the exercises often recommended for back pain.

**Target Muscles:** Back and Abdominal muscles

**Action Desired:** Flexion and extension of the spine.

#### **Steps:**

**1)** Start on your hands and knees in a “tabletop” position (Fig. 1). Your knees should be set directly below your hips and your wrists. Elbows and shoulders are in line and perpendicular to the floor. Center your head in a neutral position, eyes looking at the floor. Your fingers should point forward.

**2)** Upward Phase (Cat): Gently exhale, tuck your tail under and use your abdominal muscles to push your spine upwards towards the ceiling, making the shape of an angry cat (Fig. 2). Hold this position for 10 - 15 seconds. Release your head toward the floor, but don't force your chin to your chest.

**3)** Rest in tabletop position (Fig.1) for 3-5 seconds.

**4)** Downward Phase (Cow): As you inhale again, slowly rock your pelvis forward, using the abdominal and low back muscles to tip your tail toward the ceiling, increasing the arch in your mid and low back. Allow the belly to stretch toward the floor. Look straight ahead and pull your shoulder blades down your back (Fig. 3). Hold this position for 10 seconds.

**Note-** Be sure to keep the movements slow and controlled. Explore the entire range of movement in both directions. If these movements cause you any pain, please consult your chiropractor.

**Repetitions:** 10 reps one to two times a day holding each phase for 10-15 seconds.



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