

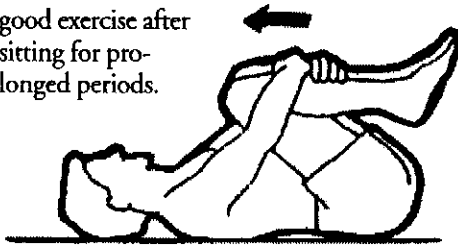
LOW BACK EXERCICES

These exercises are often helpful in keeping the back supple and well supported. This is a generic exercise program which will help most people prevent low back pain. To obtain precise information about which muscle(s) contribute most to your back pain, as well as how to safely and effectively stretch them, please consult your massage therapist.

Remember, all stretches ought to be done slowly and in as relaxed a fashion as possible!

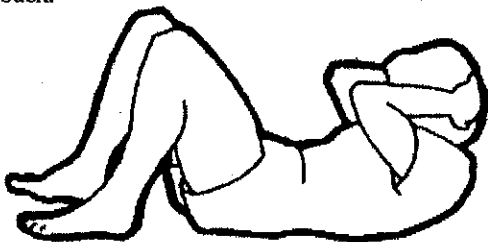
LOW BACK STRETCH

Gently pull both knees towards your chest until you feel a comfortable feeling of stretch in your low back, buttocks, and back of thighs. Hold gently for three deep, relaxed breaths, and repeat three times. This is a good exercise after sitting for prolonged periods.



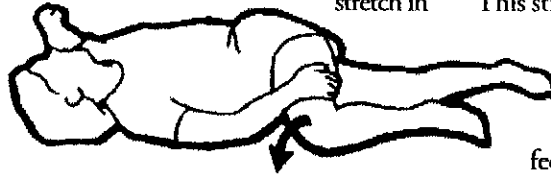
CURL UP

After stretching and relaxing the low back, strengthen the abdominal muscles by tensing them and drawing your head and neck upwards. Do not exert pressure or force on the head or neck with your hands; make the abdominal muscles work! Curl and hold for 10 seconds, repeat 5-25 times, working on increasing your strength slowly over time. Make sure your hips and knees are bent as in the illustration. Curling up with straight legs puts too much strain on the low back!



SPINAL TWIST

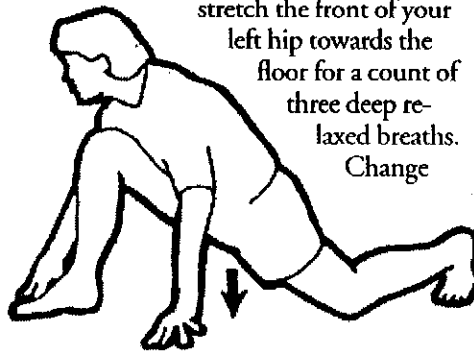
This exercise stretches the outside of the hip and keeps the spine supple. Gently pull your knee over with the opposite hand just to the point where you feel a comfortable stretch in



the hip, buttock and low back. Enjoy the stretch for three deep, relaxed breaths. Stretch to the other side for three deep breaths. Repeat both sides twice for a total of three times.

FENCER'S STRETCH

This stretch is not just for fencers, but if it proves too challenging ask your massage therapist for a less demanding variation. This exercise stretches the front of the thigh, the iliopsoas muscle, and the back of the opposite thigh. Gently stretch the front of your left hip towards the floor for a count of three deep relaxed breaths. Change



position to stretch the right hip for three deep breaths. Repeat each hip twice for a total of three times.

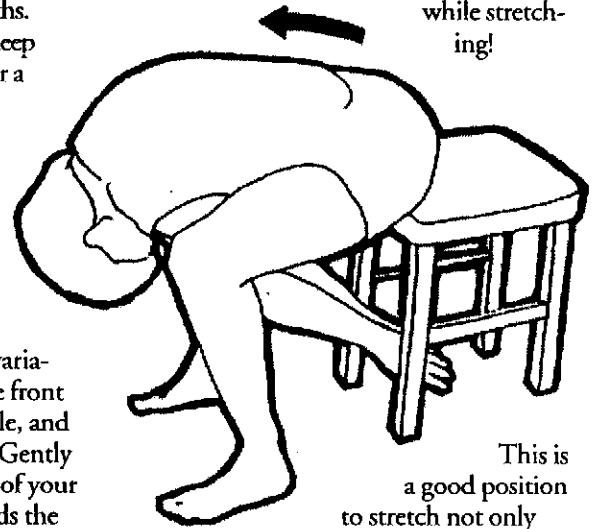
SIDE STRETCH

This exercise stretches the side of the hip and low back. Place your feet shoulder width apart, hands overhead with fingers interlaced. Slowly bend to one side and slightly forwards until you feel a gentle stretch. Relax in this position for three deep

breaths. Stretch to the other side for three deep breaths. Repeat each side twice for a total of three times per side.

STOOL STRETCH

This stretch is done equally well on a stool, or on a chair. To stretch tight sitting muscles reach forwards with arms and neck relaxed. Remember to place your feet under your knees so you do not fall forwards while stretching!



This is a good position to stretch not only the low back and buttocks, but also the mid-back which will be sore if you are slouching or straining at a keyboard. Remember, the only way to get the knots out for good is to stop slouching. Gently stretch for three deep breaths. Sit back up and

reach for the sky, then repeat the stretch twice more for a total of three times.

