

Advanced Back Stretches

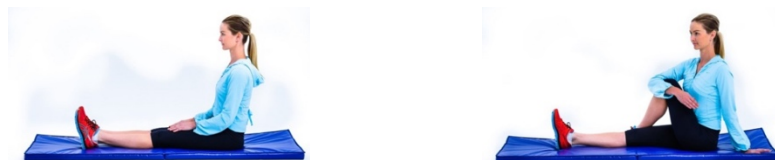
Safety notice: When starting any new exercise always ease into the stretch gently to find your comfort limit. Some mild “stretching strain” may be experienced, but if significant pain is felt then ease off and try a more gentle version of the exercise. If pain restricts you from doing these stretches at all then consult a health professional for alternative options.

1. Advanced back rotations



This exercise increases the flexibility of the joints of the lower back. Cross your left leg over your right and use this as a lever to twist your lower back. Try to keep your upper body stable and relaxed on the floor. When you have stretched as far as comfortable (lower back stretch), hold this position for 20 secs before repeating on the opposite side. Repeat twice each way.

2. Gluteal stretch



This exercise helps increase the flexibility of the lower back and gluteal (buttock) area. Start in sitting with your left leg outstretched. Cross your right leg over your left as shown and stretch your right knee towards your chest as far as comfortable. You will feel this stretching the right gluteal area. Hold this position for 20 secs before repeating on the opposite side. Repeat twice each way.

3. Hamstring stretch



This exercise helps increase the flexibility of the hamstrings, which helps maintain back flexibility. Start in sitting and stretch your left leg out in front of you. Have your right leg bent and comfortably out of the way (note: a bench may work easier to allow your right leg to be comfortable and not impeding). Slowly stretch your tummy towards your left foot, allowing your arms to creep down the leg as you do so. Pause when you reach the end of your comfortable range (hamstring stretch). Hold this position for 20 secs before repeating on the opposite side. Repeat twice each way.