

Home Exercise Library

Classic exercises for back, neck, shoulder, hip, knee & foot — one position per photo

Pairs show start → end of a movement
Move slowly · breathe · stay comfortable

How to use: a stretch should feel like gentle tension, never sharp pain. Unless told otherwise: stretches are held 20–30 seconds and repeated 3 times; strengthening moves are done in 1–3 sets of the listed repetitions, once daily. Stop any exercise that sharply increases your pain or sends it further down an arm or leg, and check with your clinician about which exercises fit your condition.

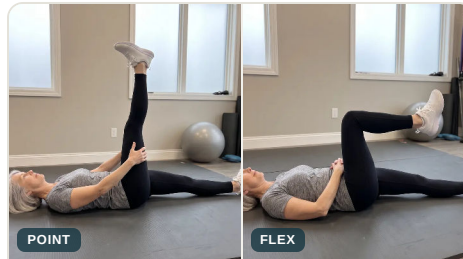
Low back

Leg pain that shoots below the knee is usually NERVE-type — start with the McKenzie press-up progression and sciatic slider, and watch the direction rule. Local back ache with stiffness is usually JOINT-type — build up the stabilizers.



McKenzie Extension Progression NERVE

Lie face down 2–3 minutes, prop onto elbows 2–3 minutes, then press the chest up with hips staying on the mat — 10 gentle reps. If your leg pain retreats toward the spine, this is your exercise; if it spreads further down the leg, stop.



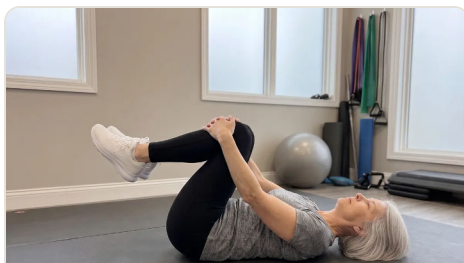
Sciatic Nerve Slider NERVE

Holding behind the thigh, alternate smoothly: straighten the knee with the foot pointed — then bend the knee and pull the foot up. A gentle rhythmic slide, never a hard stretch. 10–15 slow cycles per side.



Single Knee to Chest NERVE

For stenosis-type pain (worse standing, better sitting): pull one knee toward the chest until an easy stretch. Hold 20–30 seconds; 3 times each side.



Double Knee to Chest NERVE

Hug both knees toward the chest, letting the low back round gently — this opens the nerve passageways. Hold 20–30 seconds; repeat 3 times.



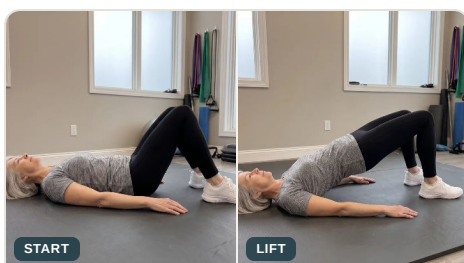
Cat – Cow JOINT

Round your back up like a cat, then let the belly sink while the chest lifts. Move slowly with your breath. 10 cycles.



Bird-Dog JOINT

Reach one arm forward and the opposite leg back until level. Hips square, back flat — this trains the deep stabilizers that protect arthritic segments. Hold 5 seconds; 10 per side.



Bridge JOINT

Squeeze the buttocks and lift the hips until shoulders, hips and knees form a line. Hold 5 seconds, lower with control. 10 repetitions.

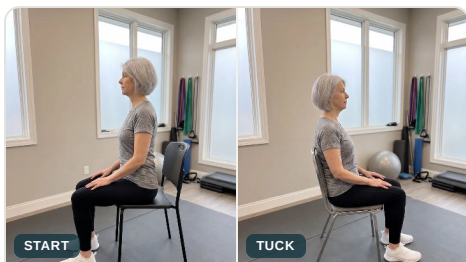


Child's Pose JOINT

Sit back onto your heels and reach forward, letting the back lengthen. A resting position between sets. Hold 30 seconds; 3 times.

Neck

Arm pain, tingling, or numbness points to a NERVE target — chin tucks and nerve sliders, guided by the direction rule. Local neck ache and stiffness points to the JOINT target — deep-flexor control and gentle stretches.



Chin Tuck (Retraction) NERVE

Glide the chin straight back — a gentle double chin — eyes level. This decompresses the lower neck where pinched nerves live. Hold 5 seconds; 10 repetitions. Arm pain easing toward the neck = the right direction.



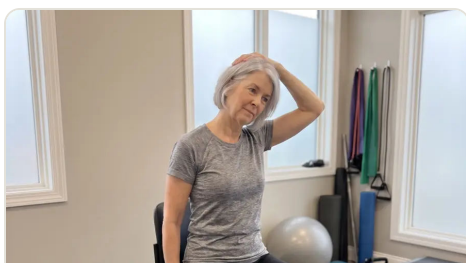
Median Nerve Slider NERVE

Arm out at shoulder height. As the wrist bends back, tilt your head TOWARD that arm; as the wrist relaxes, tilt AWAY. The nerve glides without being yanked. 10–15 smooth cycles. Mild tingling that fades is fine; electric pain is not.



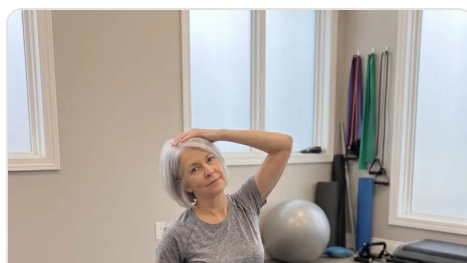
Deep Neck Flexor Nod JOINT

Lying with knees bent, nod the chin gently toward the throat — a tiny “yes” — without lifting the head. This wakes the deep stabilizers that support arthritic segments. Hold 10 seconds; 10 reps.



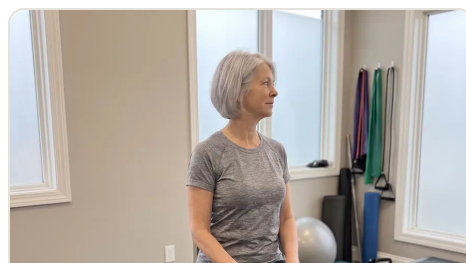
Levator Stretch JOINT

Turn the head 45° and look down toward your pocket; the hand adds gentle weight. Hold 20–30 seconds; 3 times each side.



Upper Trapezius Stretch JOINT

Ear toward one shoulder, gentle overpressure, other shoulder relaxed and low. Hold 20–30 seconds; 3 times each side.

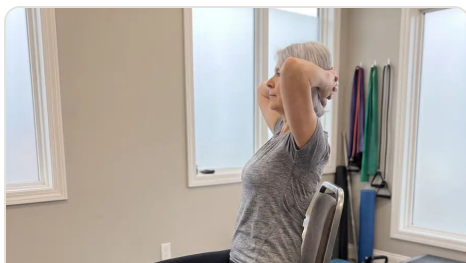


Neck Rotation JOINT

Sitting tall, slowly look over one shoulder as far as comfortable. Hold 10–15 seconds; 5 times each direction.

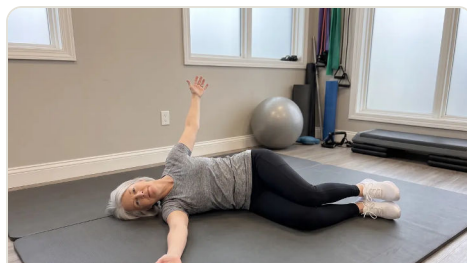
Mid-back — the connector

The mid-back is the stiffest part of the spine. When it stops extending, the neck and low back are forced to over-move — so freeing it protects BOTH neighbors. These help nearly everyone.



Seated Thoracic Extension ALL

Hands behind the head, arch the upper back over the top of the chair's backrest, chest to the ceiling. 10 slow arches — feel it between the shoulder blades, not in the low back.



Open Book ALL

Side-lying with knees stacked, sweep the top arm open like a book, chest rotating to the ceiling, eyes following the hand. 8–10 slow openings per side.

Shoulder & shoulder blade

Most shoulder pain improves when the shoulder BLADE muscles fire correctly again — that is what the Y, T, W and push-up plus retrain. If your “shoulder pain” comes with neck symptoms or tingling below the elbow, work on the neck first.



Prone “Y” JOINT

Face down, arms overhead in a Y, thumbs up. Lift the arms a few inches by drawing the shoulder blades down and in — the single best lower-trapezius builder. Hold 3 seconds; 10 reps.



Prone “T” JOINT

Arms straight out in a T, thumbs up. Squeeze the shoulder blades together as the arms lift. Hold 3 seconds; 10 reps.



Prone “W” JOINT

Elbows bent in a W, draw the elbows down and back toward the hips, blades gliding down and together. Hold 3 seconds; 10 reps.



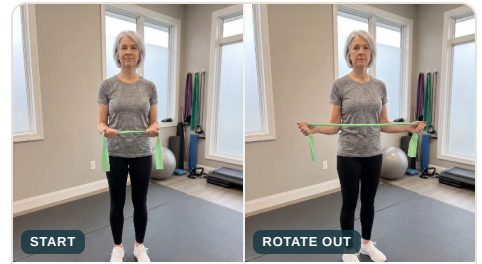
Push-Up Plus JOINT

At the top of a push-up (knees down is fine), keep the arms straight and push the floor away an extra inch so the upper back rounds slightly — this fires the serratus anterior that steers the shoulder blade. 10 slow reps.



Wall Slide JOINT

Forearms on the wall at shoulder height, slide up as high as comfortable, shoulders relaxed, then lower. 10 slow repetitions.



Band External Rotation JOINT

Elbows bent 90° and pinned to your sides, rotate the forearms outward against the band. Slow out, slow back. 10–15 repetitions.



Pendulum JOINT

Lean on a chair, let the sore arm hang heavy, and swing it in small relaxed circles. One minute each direction.



Cross-Body Stretch JOINT

Draw one arm across the chest and hug above the elbow. Hold 20–30 seconds; 3 times each side.

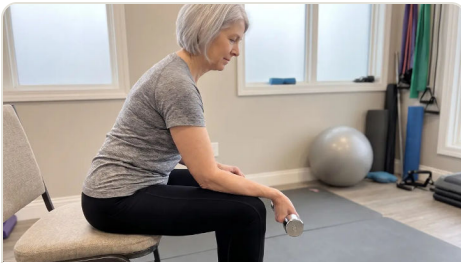


Doorway Stretch JOINT

Forearm on the frame, elbow at shoulder height, step gently through. Hold 20–30 seconds; 3 times.

Elbow & forearm

Tennis elbow is a tendon-loading problem, not simple inflammation — slow, heavy lowering is what rebuilds it. But burning pain with tingling that runs down FROM the neck is a nerve problem: treat the neck (see the nerve sliders above), not the elbow.



Eccentric Wrist Lowering JOINT

Forearm supported palm-down, small weight in hand. Lower the wrist slowly over 3–5 seconds; use the other hand to help lift it back up. 3 sets of 10–15, daily — mild ache during is acceptable, sharp pain is not.

Hip

Deep buttock pain with tingling down the leg behaves like a NERVE problem — use the sciatic slider in the low-back group. The ache of hip arthritis lives in the groin or outer hip and loves strengthening.



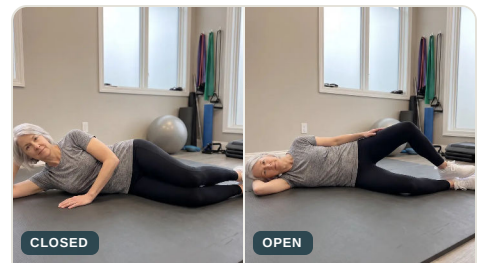
Figure-4 Stretch JOINT

Cross one ankle over the opposite knee and pull that thigh toward the chest until the buttock stretches. Hold 20–30 seconds; 3 times each side.



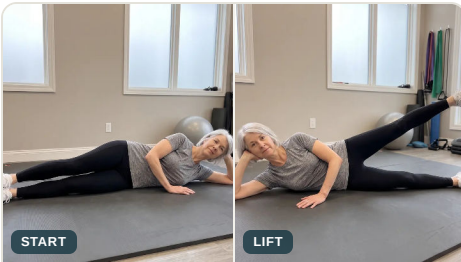
Kneeling Hip-Flexor Stretch JOINT

Half-kneeling, tuck the tailbone and shift the hips forward until the front of the hip stretches. Stay tall. Hold 20–30 seconds; 3 times each side.



Clamshell JOINT

Side-lying with knees bent and feet together, lift the top knee like a clamshell without rolling the pelvis back. 10–15 per side.

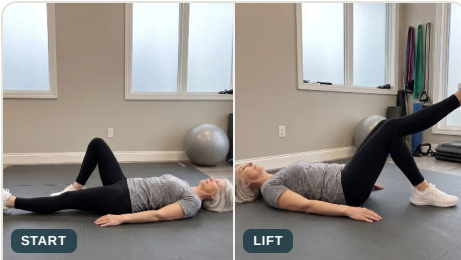


Side-Lying Leg Raise JOINT

Body in one straight line, lift the top leg to about 45° with toes forward, lower slowly. 10–15 per side.

Knee

The strongest medicine for an arthritic knee is the muscle above it: a strong quadriceps and strong hips absorb the force the worn cartilage no longer can.



Straight-Leg Raise JOINT

One knee bent, the other leg straight. Tighten the thigh, lift the straight leg to the height of the bent knee, lower slowly. 10 per side.



Hamstring Stretch with Strap JOINT

Loop a strap around the foot and raise the straight leg until the back of the thigh stretches. Hold 20–30 seconds; 3 times each side. If this brings tingling or electric pain, your “tight hamstring” may actually be an irritated sciatic nerve — switch to the sciatic slider instead.



Standing Quad Stretch JOINT

Holding a chair, bring one heel toward the buttock, knee pointing down, standing tall. Hold 20–30 seconds; 3 times each side.

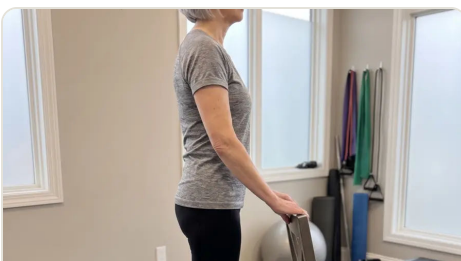


Mini Squat JOINT

Feet shoulder-width, hips back, bend the knees about 45°, then stand tall. Knees track over the toes. 10–15 repetitions.

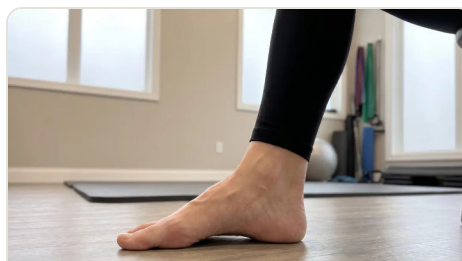
Foot & ankle

Heel and arch pain from plantar fasciitis responds to **LOADING**, not just stretching — the towel heel raise is the evidence-based centerpiece. Burning or numbness in the sole is more nerve-like; mention it, since it changes the plan.



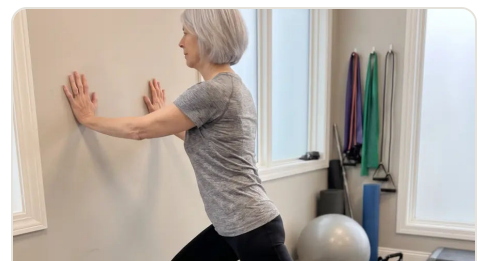
Heel Raise, Toes on Towel JOINT

With a rolled towel under the toes (this tensions the arch), rise slowly onto the balls of the feet over 3 seconds, pause, lower over 3 seconds. 3 sets of 8–12, every other day — the proven plantar-fascia rebuild.



Short-Foot Arch Lift JOINT

Seated, foot flat: dome the arch upward while the toes stay long and relaxed — as if shortening the foot. Hold 5 seconds; 10–15 reps per foot.



Wall Calf Stretch JOINT

Back leg straight, heel flat, lean in until the calf stretches. Hold 20–30 seconds; 3 times each side.



Soleus Stretch JOINT

Same stance with the back knee softly bent, heel down — the stretch drops toward the Achilles. Hold 20–30 seconds; 3 times each side.



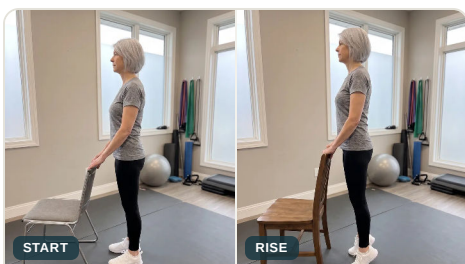
Plantar Fascia Stretch JOINT

Ankle crossed over the knee, pull the toes back until the arch stretches. Hold 20–30 seconds; 3 times — especially before the first steps of the morning.



Towel Scrunch JOINT

Barefoot, scrunch a towel toward you with the toes, re-flatten, repeat. About 2 minutes per foot.



Heel Raises JOINT

Fingertips on a chair back, rise onto the balls of both feet, pause, lower with control. 10–15 repetitions.

This handout is general patient-education material, not medical advice or a treatment recommendation. Illustrations are simplified artistic renderings, not exact anatomy. Benefits, risks, alternatives, and recovery vary by person — your physician will review the specifics of your situation, and you can ask questions at any time. Seek immediate care for fever, new weakness or numbness, loss of bladder or bowel control, or severe worsening pain.