



# PELVIC HEALTH Stretching Regimen

## STRETCHING TIPS

**All Gain, No Pain** - Stretching shouldn't hurt. If you do feel pain, ease backwards until it is comfortable again. You should never feel any numbness or tingling.

**Relax into Stretches** - Hold each stretch for at least 60 seconds, feeling the body start to relax into the position.

**Deep Breathing** - This is a great chance to practice deep breathing, relaxing the body and deepening the stretches.

**Be Comfortable** - Don't strain or overexert yourself during these stretches. If necessary, use a pillow to support your head.



### PELVIC FLOOR SQUAT      Focus: *Pelvic Floor*

- Start with legs just outside shoulder-width apart and toes pointed slightly outward
- Squat down until you are just a few inches above the floor
- Consciously relax the pelvic floor – some people describe this as feeling the pelvic floor 'drop', the sitbones spreading, or the sense of relief as you first start to urinate
- Use your elbows to spread your knees open to deepen the stretch
- You can do this with your back against a wall for additional support



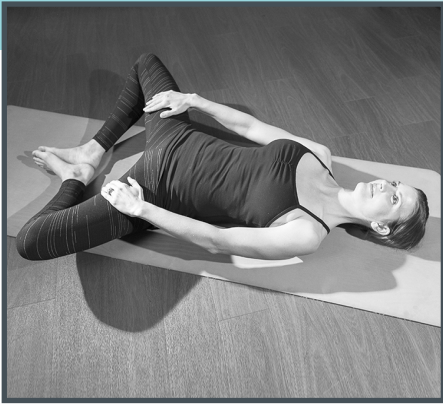
### HAPPY BABY      Focus: *Pelvic Floor*

- Lying on your back, grab the legs (at the feet, ankles, or calves) and gently pull back towards your chest
- Your feet should be closer together, with your knees flared wider
- Keep your head on the ground (use a pillow if necessary)
- Focus on 'dropping' the pelvic floor and feeling it relax
- You can use the elbows to spread the legs to deepen the stretch
- Make sure your abdominal muscles and neck are relaxed



### CHAIR STRETCH      Focus: *Hamstrings and Inner Thighs*

- Start with your feet a little wider than shoulder-width apart
- Standing approximately 2-3 feet from a surface (chair, table, counter), lean over and rest your forearms on the surface
- Keeping your back and knees straight, concentrate on lifting the tailbone towards the sky. You should feel the stretch in your hamstrings
- Then, without moving your feet or arms, slightly bend one knee while keeping the pelvis back. Leaning slightly in the direction of your bent leg, you should quickly feel a stretch running down the inner thigh of your straight leg. Hold this for 60 seconds and then switch legs



### BUTTERFLY STRETCH     Focus: *Inner Thighs*

- Start on your back with knees raised and pointed to the ceiling, feet on the floor
- Slowly let your knees fall outward, feeling a stretch in your upper inner thighs
- If this is difficult or painful, you can slide a pillow under your legs to help support their weight, or start with one leg at a time
- You can also do the stretch sitting up, with the soles of your feet pressed together, arms resting on your legs to help deepen the stretch



### MINI-LUNGE STRETCH     Focus: *Hip Flexors (Front of the Thigh)*

- Take a step forward, about 50% longer than your normal stride. Your feet should be flat on the floor and facing forward
- Align your pelvis with your front leg so your torso is aimed directly over your leading foot, and fight the tendency to let your torso twist. You may already feel a stretch in your back leg
- If you're able, gradually bend your front knee and enhance the stretch, which you should be feeling in your upper inner thigh, right near your groin. You may also feel a stretch in the calves
- Hold for 60 seconds, then switch legs



### COBRA STRETCH     Focus: *Abdominal Muscles*

- Start with laying on your stomach, face down
- With the tops of your feet on the floor and hands shoulder-width apart, gently straighten your arms to arch your back
- Keep your pelvis glued to the ground
- If you're unable to hold yourself up with your arms or have back pain with the full stretch, you can instead put your elbows and forearms on the ground to gently raise up



### FIGURE '4' STRETCH     Focus: *Piriformis (Glutes)*

- Start on your back, feet flat on the floor and knees bent  
Place your right ankle on the front of your left knee, creating a keyhole (or the open part of the number '4')
- You may feel a stretch already in your right glute muscles, stretching from your sit bone towards the outside of your hip
- If you are able, reach both hands forward. Clasp them behind your left knee and gently pull it back towards you, enhancing the stretch. Hold this for at least 60 seconds and then switch legs