

Pelvic Floor Restorative Exercise Kit

www.fitactive.co.uk
07902 489 417

Mini Exercise Pack

Safety

If you are at all unsure that you are physically ready to exercise, consult your GP or Health Professional.

At all times, work at your own pace and progress gradually.

If you feel any pain or severe discomfort during exercise, stop the exercise.

If you are in any doubt about your technique, consult an exercise professional before continuing with the exercises.

These exercises are undertaken at your own risk.

Neutral Spine

When lying on your back, ensure that you can slip your fingertips under the curve at the middle of your back. As you work through an exercise, make sure your muscles are holding the curve in place. If you feel your back move when it is not described as part of the exercise, then stop at the point just prior to this and return to the start of the exercise. Your strength will gradually improve, it is important to keep practicing with the correct technique.

Breathing

Breathe throughout each exercise. As a rule of thumb, breathe out on exertion - when the exercise is hardest. Never hold your breath during exercise.

Frequency

Spend 1 minute on each exercise and try to repeat them three times in total. You can do all six three times over or do one set three times a day.

Acknowledgement

With thanks to Katy Bowman of Aligned and Well (www.alignedandwell.com) and the Institute for Restorative Exercise for the exercises shown in this leaflet.

Calf Stretch



- A really effective and strong stretch for the calf. Take gently.
- Place the ball of one foot on a half cylinder, or rolled towel.
- Place the other foot a little in front of the first, as if you are taking a small step forwards.
- Keep the knee and hip of the stretching leg directly above the heel.
- Stand upright, breathe and hold the stretch for 30 seconds or so.
- Repeat with the other leg.

Full Leg Stretch



- A stretch to work from the calves right up to the hamstrings.
- Place the balls of both feet on a half cylinder or rolled towel.
- Lean forward and place the hands on the seat of a chair.
- Ensure that you are maintaining the natural curve of the back with a slight concave of the lumbar spine.
- Check your position in a mirror.
- Hold for one minute, breathing throughout.
- Relax the neck to get a stronger stretch through the backs of the legs.

Hip Rotator Strengtheners



- This will work the muscles at the side of the buttocks and the lower abs. Maintain a neutral spine throughout.
- Lying comfortably on the floor, place a small exercise ball or something soft such as a folded towel between the knees.
- Relax the arms at your sides with the palms upwards.
- Breathe out and squeeze the knees together then draw them in towards the chest.
- Breathing in, slowly return the feet to the floor.
- To progress, move the feet apart and maintain the distance between them as you move the knees between the two positions.
- Repeat the knee movements for one minute.

Squat Preparation



- Until you are able to comfortably get into and out of the supported squat, it is just as valuable to work on this preparation exercise.
- From an all-fours kneeling position, ensure that your knees are directly aligned with your hips and that the ankles are aligned with the knees.
- Move your bum back towards your heels.
- Maintain a natural curve on the back at all times.
- If your back starts to curve then take your weight forward again, onto the arms.
- Move your bum towards the heels as far as possible before the back curves and hold this position for a minute or so.
- To progress, tuck the toes under.

Supported Squat



- *Do not attempt this exercise if you have replacement knee or hip joints, if you are heavily pregnant, or have had recent pelvic floor surgery.*
- Place both heels on a half cylinder or rolled towel.
- As you bend the knees, keep the heels resting on the support and place a yoga mat or second towel behind the knees.
- Bend the knees until you are in a squatting position.
- Focus on maintaining a natural curve on the back and hold for a minute or more.

Inner Thigh Stretch



- Lie on your side with your bum as close to a wall as you can manage and your legs outstretched. Imagine you are in a floor-seated position with the wall as the floor.
- Lie on your back and swing your legs upwards and rest the heels on the wall, directly above your hips.
- Flex the ankles so that the toes are pointing towards your body.
- Allow the wall to support your legs as you slide your heels out to the side.
- Keep the ankles flexed and imagine the little toes aiming to touch the wall.
- Relax, breathe and feel the stretch along the inner thighs.
- Hold for one minute. If you need to relax the inner thigh muscles, take hold of the backs of the knees and draw the thighs to the chest.

Natural, Aligned Movement

Whatever you are doing, try to remember a few golden rules.

- Walking is wonderful.
- Go barefoot as much as is safely possible.
- Wear low heels, negative heels or "barefoot" footwear with plenty of room around the toes.
- Stockists of barefoot footwear include www.vivobarefoot.com, www.vibramfivetoes.com. Alternatively, look out for "minimal" or "neutral" footwear.
- Minimise the time you spend sitting on chairs.
- Squat as part of your natural movement pattern.
- When standing, think of having the outer edges of the feet in parallel.
- Relax the core and if you need to, consider other form of relaxation and stress management.
- Don't spend too long sitting or standing in any one position.
- For more information on alignment, see www.alignedandwell.com.