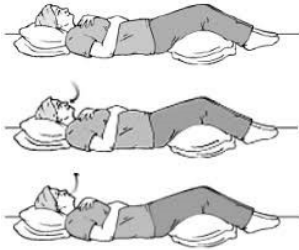


## POSTURAL RETRAINING EXERCISES

These are a general sampling of some common exercises used to help improve posture and movement patterns. If you want more specific exercises, just ask! The goal with posture is to take little microbreaks throughout your day to help prevent stiffness and discomfort from setting in. The more we can stand, walk, move, or jiggle, the better. Also, the more we can focus on diaphragmatic breathing, the more stabilized your core will be AND the less tension will be held by your neck and shoulders. **NOTE: The content here is for general information purposes only- proceed at your own risk.**

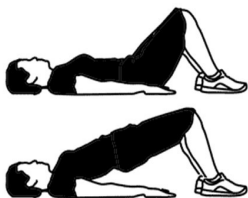
SUPINE BREATHING (aka Diaphragmatic Breathing): Proper breathing is the foundation for movement. When you breathe using your diaphragm, the muscle designed for optimal respiration, you properly pressurize your core and create a solid base for powerful, efficient movement. This habit can also decrease the tension held in your shoulders/neck from constantly using your “accessory breathing muscles”. Helping release discomfort and stress! Lay on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor or table. Place one hand on your chest and the other hand on your stomach. Picture a balloon in your stomach that will expand out symmetrically while you inhale and deflate while you exhale. Comfortably inhale and exhale. The hand on your stomach should rise significantly more than the hand on your chest.

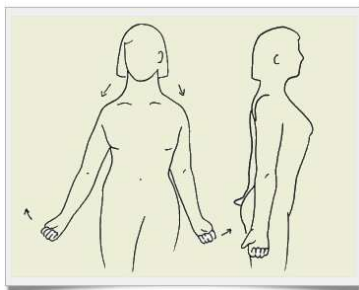


Pelvic Tilt: This activity creates mobility and symmetry while pumping fluid and nutrients to the discs & spinal joints in the lower back. Lay on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. In a slow and controlled manner, gently press your low back into the floor or table. Your pelvis will gently tip backwards as you do so. Breathe normally, do not hold your breath. Slowly relax and come back to neutral position. Continue performing the diaphragmatic breathing while performing this exercise!



Supine Bridge: Your spinal extensor muscles need to be 30% stronger than the flexors. By learning to activate your core and related muscles, body awareness and stabilization will improve. Lay on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor or table. Apply even pressure on your feet, pressurize your core (see above), and slowly raise your hips. Only raise up to your comfort level; do not push into pain. You should feel activation in the erector spinae muscles located in the lower back, as well as the glutes and (somewhat) the hamstring muscles. Do not hold your breath. Slowly and symmetrically lower your hips back down. **WARNING:** This exercise may make some patients with lumbar stenosis WORSE.

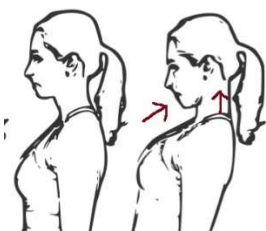




**Bruggers Relief Posture:** This activity creates mobility and stretch while allowing the body to recenter itself. This is great to use if you've been sitting for awhile and need that micro-break. Start by standing with feet shoulder's width apart in a neutral position. As you breathe in slowly rotate your arms and palms outwards, roll your shoulders back (bringing shoulder blades together), retract/tuck your chin, and tilt your pelvis forward, gently deepening the curve or "dip" of your low back. Hold for a second or two, then slowly return to neutral as you breathe out and repeat.



**Cat Cow (aka Cat – Old Horse):** Just like with pelvic tilts, this activity supports mobility and symmetry, especially of the mid-upper back, while pumping fluid and nutrients to the discs & spinal joints in the lower back. Position on your hands and knees on the floor with your hands stacked under your shoulders and your knees stacked under your hips, creating a 90° angle at each joint. Inhale and slowly arch your back up like a string is pulling your upper back to the ceiling (like a stretching cat does), while dropping your head down. Exhale and slowly drop your low back down like the "old horse," while gently lifting your head up. Transition slowly through these two positions – always without pain.



**Cervical Retractions:** This is a fantastic exercise to help stretch the muscle on the back of your neck that tend to get overworked as we hold our heads forward, while activating the muscles in front. It also has the added benefit of creating mobility within the spinal joints and helps pump nutrients into your discs. Start by sitting in a neutral-upright position, looking forwards. Using 2 fingers on your chin, gently press back and slightly upwards. You know you're doing it right when you feel a stretch and feels like you have a double chin.



**Hip Hinge:** Hip hinging is essential to proper sitting (getting in/out of a car, on/off the toilet, etc.) and lifting (a weight, a box, a child, anything). Begin with your feet comfortably at shoulder width in a stable stance. Keeping a small dip ("lordosis") in your lower back, "hinge" at your hips (NOT in your low back), bringing your pelvis backwards with the "hinge" at your hips. Your pelvic bone should drift back (posterior) along with your butt (glutes) as you hinge at the hips. Be sure your knees do NOT drift in front of your toes. Squat/sit in a controlled manner, until you're either seated or your thighs are parallel to the floor. You will feel an activation in your quads as you control yourself down into a seated position, but the focus is your powerful glutes (butt muscles) – NOT the smaller back muscles. The motion should be powerful, controlled, and (with some training) natural. When you rise back up to stand, activate your glutes, always hinging at the hips. Standing should be a mirror image of sitting. Make sure your weight remains evenly distributed between your feet. Rocking on your toes or heels will cause you to be unstable. Keep your head up, looking to or above the horizon. Control any excess knee drift (especially side-to-side). As a training tool to further activate the glutes, you can use a band to create slight inward pressure on the thighs, forcing you to activate your glutes to keep your knees apart and aligned.