

Supine Piriformis Stretch

Stretching the piriformis muscle is almost always necessary to relieve the pain along the sciatic nerve and can be done in several different positions. A number of stretching exercises for the piriformis muscle, hamstring muscles and hip extensor muscles may be used to help decrease the painful symptoms along the sciatic nerve and return the patient's range of motion.

- Begin by lying on your back and crossing your left leg over your right with your knees bent. Grasp left knee with both hands. Bring left knee toward the opposite shoulder. Slowly increase pressure on ankle using right hand. Feel the stretch in left buttocks. Hold for 30 seconds, repeat 3 times. Repeat with right leg.



Cervical Curve Exercise

Cervical kyphosis is a name given to the condition where the normal curve of the neck begins to straighten. Cervical kyphosis can progress to the point where the curve in the neck actually reverses, going in the opposite direction from its normal, healthy state.

- This exercise uses a bath towel rolled up. Place the towel behind your neck on top of your shoulders. Lean your head back and shrug your shoulders upward. Hold this position for a few seconds, do 10 repetitions. There should be no discomfort during this exercise, if you experience any pain do not continue.



Wall Squat with Fitness Ball

Squats engage the core muscles of the body. Abdominal and back muscles are needed to keep balance during the movement. The result is a tighter, flatter abdomen and a stronger lower back. Make a conscious effort to hold in your abdominal muscles while squatting down to increase this effect. Doing squats increases joint flexibility. The ankles, knees, hips and lower back are all utilized in the squatting motion. Be sure to maintain proper form to avoid injury.

- Stand with feet shoulder width apart, toes out at about a 45-degree angle and place an exercise ball behind your lower back for support. Bend the knees and lower into a squat, keeping the knees in line with the toes. Lower down as far as your flexibility allows and push into the heels to go back to starting position. Complete 10 repetitions. This exercise should be comfortable for the knees and hips, if not discontinue.

