

# EGOSCUE CLINIC PAIN/POSTURE STRETCHES

## 1. Standing Arm Circles: Helps Restore Upper Body Strength



Two sets of 40 repetitions each.

*Stand with your feet pointed straight and hip-width apart.*

Place your fingertips into the palm of each hand and point your thumbs straight out (this hand position is important for the exercise to be done correctly.)

Pull your shoulders back by squeezing your shoulder blades together, then bring your arms out straight from your sides up to shoulder level.

With palms facing down and your thumbs pointing straight forward, rotate your hands up and forward in approximately six-inch circles. Do twenty reps. Rest and repeat.

Then reverse direction: palms should face up, with thumbs pointed straight backward. Rotate your hands up and backward. Do twenty reps. Rest and repeat.

## 2. Standing Elbow Curls: Helps Move Shoulder Joints Back into Neutral Position



One set of 25 repetitions

*Stand at a wall with your heels, hips, upper back, and head against the wall. Your feet should be pointed straight and hip-width apart.*

Place your knuckles against your temples with your thumbs pointing down toward your shoulders (your fingertips should be touching your palm like they were on the last exercise). Open and pull back your elbows so that they are against the wall, then close your elbows together in front of your face (Be sure that your elbows stay at shoulder level—don't let them drop down!) Repeat for twenty-five reps. This exercise helps to remind the shoulders that they are hinges, and helps to both loosen and strengthen the upper body.

### 3. Airbench: Helps Bring Hips, Knees and Ankles into Alignment



Hold this stretch for two minutes.

*Stand with your back against a wall with feet and knees hip-width apart and feet pointed straight.*

Walk your feet away from the wall while sliding your body down at the same time. You will be “seated” in an invisible chair; your knees should be bent at about 105 degrees (a little wider than a right angle). Your hips should be just slightly higher than your knees and your ankles slightly ahead of your knees. Your lower back should be completely against the wall, your arms can hang down or be placed gently in your lap. Keep your weight on your heels.

*Be sure to do this exercise in athletic shoes or on a yoga mat. Don't try it in socks or bare feet—you might slip! If you find this is hard to do, just try for a few seconds and build up. The idea here is that you engage your lower body during a short period of FORCED alignment. All these exercises are designed to help train your body to return to its original state.*

## 4. Assisted Runners Stretch: Helps Train Your Pelvis to Work the Right Way



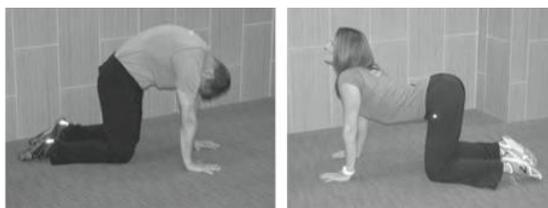
Hold this stretch for one minute.

*Kneel down in front of a chair or table that you can use to stabilize and support your body. Place the back of your left heel on the front of your right knee. Be sure that you are up on the toes of your right foot, with the bottom of your foot pointing behind you. Keep your left foot, your right knee, and your right foot in line with each other.*

Keeping your hands on the chair, stand up and begin bending over while rolling your hips back, which will make an arch in your lower back. The heel of your right foot should be on the ground.

Tighten your thighs (quads) while relaxing your upper body. Keep your weight on the inside of each foot, and keep your lower back arched. Hold for one minute; switch sides and repeat.

## 5. Cats and Dogs: Helps Exercise and Coordinate Hips, Shoulders, Spine and Neck



One set of ten repetitions.

*Start on your hands and knees. Be sure that your hips are directly above your knees, and that your shoulders are directly above your hands. Your fingers should be pointed forward.*

Move into *cat* by pulling your hips under, pulling your head under and pushing your upper back to the ceiling to round your back. Exhale.

Then move into *dog*, by rolling your hips forward, putting an arch in your back and collapsing your shoulder blades together. Look up. Inhale.

Move from cat to dog ten times for the full set. Do this as SMOOTHLY as you can. It should feel GREAT.

## 6. Downward Dog: Reconnects the Linkage Between Your Wrists and Feet



Hold this exercise for one minute.

*Start on your hands and knees. Your hands should be directly below your shoulders; your knees should be in line with your hips.*

Pull your toes under to grip the floor, and pull your knees off the floor into the pike position (see Fig.) Your knees should be straight. The goal is to pull your upper body through your arms toward the floor. Though your heels do not need to touch the floor, this is the intended position (and can be a goal to work toward).

Concentrate on trying to roll your hips forward to place an arch in your lower back, tighten your thighs, and hold for 1 minute.

*Make SURE to breathe and please do NOT force your heels to the floor. This can take time.*

## 7. Hip Lift: Helps Reduce Hip Pain, Relaxes ENTIRE Body



Hold for one minute on each side of your body.

*Lie on your back with your feet on the floor. Cross one ankle/foot just above the opposite knee, and place it just above the knee on your leg.*

Lift the foot that is still on the floor up until your calf is parallel to the ground, and your knee is bent at a ninety-degree angle. Relax your shoulders and put your arms out to your side, palms facing up.

As you pull the knee with your ankle on it toward you, press the other knee away. Hold for one minute, then switch sides and repeat.

## 8. Hip Crossover Stretch: Helps Reduce Hip Pain, Back Pain, Shoulder Pain and Knee Pain



Hold this stretch for one minute on each side of your body.

*Lie on your back with both knees bent and your feet flat on the floor, pointed ahead. Place your arms out to the side at shoulder level, with your palms facing down, flat on the floor.*

Cross your left ankle over your right knee and rotate the ankle/knee junction down toward the floor. Your left foot should now be flat on the floor, along with the outside of your right leg. Look in the opposite direction and relax your shoulders. Press the left knee away from your body using your left hip muscles. Hold for one minute, then switch sides and repeat.

## 9. One-Arm Bridge: Advanced Exercise That Builds Your Core Muscles



Hold for one minute on each side of the body.

*Lie on your side with the hand that is under your body on the floor slightly ahead of your shoulder.*

Stack your feet so the outside of one foot is on the floor and the other foot is stacked on top of it. (You can rest your feet against a wall if you need to.)

Prop yourself up onto one hand, so your arm is fully extended. When your arm is extended, your hand will be in front of your shoulder.

Raise your other arm to the ceiling and look up. Keep your hip and pelvis in line; as you get tired, try not to let them drop toward the floor. Hold for one minute, then switch sides and repeat.

## 10. Static Back: The Single MOST IMPORTANT Exercise, Helps You Walk Properly, Sets Stage for Back Pain Elimination.

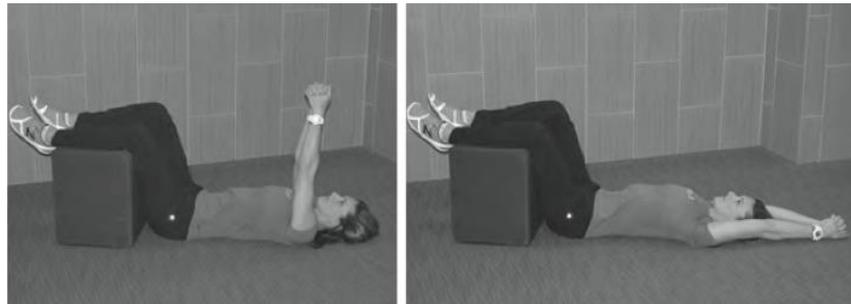


Hold for five minutes.

*Lie on your back with your legs up over a block or a chair. Place your arms out to your sides about forty-five degrees away from your body with your palms facing up.*

Relax your upper back, and notice if your lower back flattens to the floor evenly from left to right. Hold for five minutes. It should FEEL GREAT. If there is only one stretch you do every single day, do this one. Continue if possible with #11.

## 11. Static Back Pull-Overs: Helps Promote Proper Posture and Movement



Three sets of ten repetitions each.

*Lie on your back with your legs up over a block or a chair so that your legs are bent at a right angle. Relax your legs, lower back and stomach.*

Reach your arms straight above your chest, elbows locked, and hands clasped together. Lower your hands down to the floor above your head. Do not contract your abdominal muscles; keep your stomach and lower back relaxed. **Do not let your arms bend at the elbow.** If you are not able to lower your hands all the way to the floor behind you, go only as low as you are able to with straight arms. Do ten reps in each set.

## 12. Upper Spinal Floor Twist: Helps Get Rid Of Shoulder Pain, Aligns Shoulders and Arms



Hold for one minute on each side.

*Lie on your side in the fetal position, with your arms held straight out from your shoulders in front of you.*

Stack your knees directly atop one another, where they should remain throughout the exercise. Open your top arm, lifting it up and over your body to the other side, letting it rest on the floor (or as close to the floor as you're able). Your shoulders and torso will follow; however, don't move your lower body from the previous position. Feel free to use your bottom hand to hold your knees together.

Move your head to look in the same direction as your top arm. Breathe deeply and evenly; allow your body to open up.

Hold for one minute and repeat on the other side.

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This is a basic introduction to the Egoscue (*egg ahs' cue*) stretches. You can find more in Dr. Egoscue's book, *Pain Free* or visit [www.egoscue.com](http://www.egoscue.com) for additional options.

See also <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqNnmC09eUU> and other videos.