

welllife

WELLNESS STUDIO

Fitness | Nutrition | Yoga | Massage

Personalized Core & Flexibility Routine

Jennifer Sams
9.16.22



CORE & FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES

Created By: Katy Harris, MSPH, CSCS

Welcome! Try this routine before and after workouts to increase gains and reduce risk of injury.

Foam rolling* improves flexibility, prepares the body for a workout, and aids in recovery. By putting pressure on the muscles and tendons, blood is stopped to those areas temporarily, then allowed to flow back through once pressure is released. Rolling for 5-10 repetitions ('reps' for short) on muscles will enhance communication to the muscle from the brain. After the workout, sit on tight areas for 30" (seconds), or until you feel them release. Increase and decrease pressure by distributing body weight to hands and feet. Use a lacrosse (muscles) or tennis ball (back and areas closer to joints) for directed pressure.

***FOR SAFETY:** Do not roll on bones and joints (e.g. shoulders, hips, spine, knees, ankles) to avoid the 'bursa', sacs of fluid that are irritated by constant pressure.

Static stretching of tight muscles before a workout for 3-5" each, for 5-10 repetitions, will increase range of motion without overstretching. Before a workout, muscles are cool and less flexible, so holding for only a few seconds is more effective to increase range of motion. After a workout, hold stretches for a at least 6-10" to allow muscles to relax to their normal length. Tight tendons and ligaments receive less blood flow and may need to stretch up to 2-3' to be effective. Engage the core and hold good posture for a deeper stretch. Stretch just to pain tolerance to avoid over-tensing, and allow muscles to lengthen with slow breaths.

Core Strengthening Exercises before a workout will activate weaker muscles and facilitate proper firing during functional motions. Do only 5-10 reps, x 1 set only to avoid overworking these smaller muscle groups before major exercises. After the workout, do 1-2 sets of 10-20 reps to exhaust muscles and stimulate maximum growth.



Instructions

Before the workout:

1. Complete **Foam Rolling Exercises**, x 5-10 repetitions (reps) on each area.
2. Complete **Stretches** for 3-5 seconds, x 5-10 reps each area.

After the workout:

1. Complete **Core Strengthening Exercises** x 10-20 reps each, x 1-2 sets.
2. Complete **Stretches** x 10-30" (seconds) each.
3. Complete **Foam Rolling Exercises**, x 10-60" on tight areas.

FOAM ROLL	STRETCH
Foam Roll 5-10 times each area: Piriformis* Hamstrings Calves (behind knee) Calves (lower leg)* Quads IT Bands Groin Mid-back Upper back Lats	Hold stretch for 3 seconds and repeat 5 times each area: Piriformis (hip) Hamstrings Hip flexor Adductors (groin) Quads Calves Lower Back Triceps Shoulders Chest Neck

CORE STRENGTH

- [Leg Lifts and Leg Extensions on Foam Roller](#)
- [Straight Leg Raises](#)
- [Single Leg Bridges](#)
- [Clam Shells, Side Leg Raises](#)
- [3-Way Lunge with foot on Frisbee](#)
- [Band Pull-downs](#)
- [Band Rows](#)
- [Shoulder External / Internal Rotations](#)
- [Superman's, Hands Shoulder Height](#)
- [Chin Tucks \(towel behind head\)](#)
- [Planks x 30" \(seconds\)](#)



EXERCISE DESCRIPTIONS – Foam Rolling

Piriformis*



- Sit on the foam roller with one leg crossed and the hands on the floor behind you.
- Lean on the crossed leg and find the hip bone by rolling forward and back. Roll for 5-10 reps.

Hamstrings



- Sit on the roller with the legs straight and hands behind you.
- Roll along the backs of the legs between the hips and the knees.
- Turn the toes in and out as you roll to feel the inner and outer hamstrings.

Calves (behind knee)



- Lie on the roller on your stomach, supporting your weight with the hands under the shoulders.
- Roll back and forth on the front of the thighs between the hips and the knees, turning toes in and out as you roll to feel the inner and outer quad muscles.

Calves (lower leg)*



- Sit on the roller with the legs straight and the hands behind you on the floor.
- Roll back and forth between the knees and the ankles.
- Turn the toes in and out as you roll to feel the inner and outer calf muscles.

Quads



- Lie on the roller on your stomach, supporting your weight with the hands under the shoulders.
- Roll back and forth on the front of the thighs between the hips and the knees, turning toes in and out as you roll to feel the inner and outer quad muscles.

EXERCISE DESCRIPTIONS – Foam Rolling



IT Bands



- Lie on your side on the roller with the hands under the shoulders.
- Place the bottom leg straight, with the roller on the side of the leg just under the hip.
- Bend the top knee and place the foot on the floor in front of the other leg to help support your weight.
- Roll back and forth from the hip to the knee.

Groin



- Lie on your stomach with the foam roller lengthwise next to you with one leg straight, and one knee bent.
- Roll back and forth along the inner thigh from the hip to the knee on the bent leg. Go all the way until the muscle attaches in both directions.

Mid-back



- Lie on your back with the roller just under the shoulder blades supporting the head with the hands, knees bent and feet on the floor.
- Roll back and forth 5-10 inches, but do not go on the lumbar spine (where it curves away from the floor).
- Lean right and left to find the side back muscles.

Upper back



- Lie on your back with the roller directly under the shoulder blades, supporting the head with the hands with knees bent and feet on the floor.
- Roll back and forth 5-10 inches, above and below the shoulder blades and up toward the neck, but do not go on the cervical spine just below the head (find with your hand).
- Lean right and left to find the side

Lats



- Lie on your side with the roller just below the shoulder and hips on the floor, with the lower arm extended above the head. Bend the knees together at 90 degrees, and support the head with upper arm.
- Roll back and forth along the shoulder blade, leaning forward and back slightly to find tight muscles along your side.



Exercise Descriptions – Stretches

Piriformis (hip)



- Lie on your stomach on the hands or elbows, with one leg straight and one knee bent under the stomach.
- Keep the knee bent at 90 degrees, with a slight angle at the hip so the knee is in the middle of the body.
- While supporting your weight, sit the hip on the bent leg away from the knee, stretching the side of the leg and hip.

Hamstrings



- Lie on your back with a towel or stretching strap wrapped around the ball of the foot and leg extended.
- The other leg may be straight or slightly bent with the feet on the floor.
- Pull the foot toward the chest keeping the quad engaged and hip on the floor.

Hip flexor



- Kneel on one knee on a pad, with the knee at 90 degrees.
- Engage the core and low abdominals, and lean the hips forward slightly until you feel a stretch in the upper leg.
- Keep a flat back, and reach one hand over the forward knee to get a higher stretch, then above the opposite shoulder with the palm toward the ceiling. Add a [quad stretch](#).

Adductors (groin)



- Support your weight on the hands and knees, with hands under the shoulders and knees under the hips.
- Extend one knee to the side until you feel a stretch along the in the inner thigh. You may feel this closer to the knee, or closer to the hip.

Quads



- Lie on one side, supporting your head with the lower arm, and holding the top foot at the instep (tops of shoelaces).
- Keep the hips 'stacked' with one directly above the other, and pull the heel toward the hip.
- Push the hips forward to get the best stretch.



Exercise Descriptions – Stretches

Calves



- Support yourself on your hands and feet in a 'pike position', with the hips at 90 degrees.
- Push back on the hands and reach the hips up toward the ceiling and away from the heels, elbows extended.
- Sit the weight into the heels as your hips reach up and back, letting them fall one at a time toward the floor. You should feel this behind the knee.
- Bend one knee at a time to get an additional stretch in the low leg.

Lower back



- Lie on your stomach with the knees bent and hips under the heels.
- Reach the arms straight above the head, and let the head fall between the hands.
- Sit the hips toward the heels while pressing gently into the floor with the hands to feel a stretch in the low back and lats.

Triceps



- Seated or standing, hold one elbow behind the head with the other arm, keeping good posture.
- Reach the elbow gently away from the shoulder, to feel a stretch under the arm and side.

Shoulders



- Seated or standing, cross one arm straight over the chest and hold it with the other arm, elbow bent.
- Keeping good posture, extend the elbow fully as you pull the arm gently across the chest.

Chest



- Stand with the arms slightly bent and wrists in a doorway placed at shoulder height. Walk the feet to directly under the chest, and keep the chin tucked.
- Keeping good posture, lean into the doorway to feel a stretch under the armpits.

Neck



- Seated or standing:
- Variation #1: Let one ear fall toward the shoulder, gently pulling with the same hand placed on the head.
- Variation #2: Look at the armpit and place the opposite arm behind the back.
- Variation #3: Turn the head to look all the way at the shoulder.



Exercise Descriptions – Core Strengthening

Low Abdominal March on Floor



- Lie on your back with your arms by the sides, knees bent and the feet flat on the floor, shoulder width apart.
- ‘Draw in’ the belly toward the spine and the low abdominals engaged (e.g. place a towel under the low back and keep the low back flat on the floor). Feel the gluts engage, activating the entire core.
- Hold the low abdominals engaged and lift one foot ~2 inches off the ground, keeping the knee bent at 90 degrees.
- Reengage the low abdominals as you slowly return the foot to the ground, without rocking sideways.
- Continue alternating legs, holding the hips as still as possible and breathing normally.
- Progress to [Low Abdominal Marches](#) on a foam roller.

Straight Leg Raises



- Start lying on your back with your arms by the sides, legs straight and feet shoulder width apart.
- Keep the low abdominals drawn in and the back flat on the floor (using the arms straight to cradle the hips if necessary), and lift one leg as far as possible while keeping the knee completely straight and the toe pulled up toward the shin.
- Lower the leg slowly, keeping the hips as still as possible and the low abs drawn in through the entire range of motion. Repeat on the same leg until all repetitions are complete.

Single Leg Bridge, Hold Knee

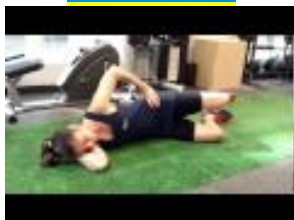


- Lie on your back with one foot under the knee and one knee bent, holding it with the arm on the same side.
- Holding the arms by the sides to balance, press through the heel on the ground and lift the hips until they are in line with the shoulders and knees.
- Extend the hips fully before returning to the ground and gently touching the ground before the next rep. Keep the quad and hamstring engaged through the range of motion, and fully extend the hips with the gluts at the top of the motion.



Exercise Descriptions – Core Strengthening

Clamshells



- Start lying on one side with the knees bent and hand supporting the head, feet in line with the hips.
- Lift the knee up as high as possible, keeping the hips stacked (one directly on top of the other) and the heels together.
- Place one hand on the top hip to stabilize the hip and feel the muscle engage.
- Do not let the hips open as the knee lifts.

3-Way Lunges on Slider



- Start standing with one leg on the ground, and the other foot on a slider or surface that will allow the foot to slide along the ground (e.g. Frisbee on turf).
- Do a 1/2 lunge, reaching the foot on the slider first to the side, then 45 degrees back, then directly backward, straightening the stable leg each rep.
- Complete x 10 reps in each direction before switching legs.

Band Pull-downs



- Stand holding the handles of a double chord band fixed to a surface with the arms straight, hands at waist height. Start with a slight tension in the band, leaning back slightly with upright posture and pronated grip (palms down).
- Keeping the wrists straight, push the palms toward the front of the thighs, pulling the shoulder blades back and down as though pinching a pencil.
- Keep the chest up and elbows straight, and do not let the wrists break.
- Resist the upward motion of the band and return, controlled, to the starting position, and repeat for the indicated number of repetitions

Band Rows*



- Stand holding the handles of a double chord band fixed to a surface with the arms straight, hands at shoulder height. Start with a slight tension in the band, leaning back slightly with upright posture and a pronated grip (palms down).
- Pull the bands toward you and bend the elbows, pulling the shoulder blades back and down as though pinching a pencil.
- Resist the band slightly as you return to the starting position, and repeat for the indicated number of reps.

***NOTE:** Feel the shoulders pull slightly forward before beginning the next repetition to allow for full range of motion.



Exercise Descriptions – Core Strengthening

Side Lying Shoulder External Rotations



- Start lying on one side with the knees bent at 90 degrees and hand supporting the head. Keep the feet in line with the hips.
- Place one hand by the side, elbow at 90 degrees, with a towel or soft object between the elbow and side.
- Starting with a neutral grip and one thumb up, turn the thumb to a supinated grip as you lift the hand from in front of the body as far backward as possible.
- Do not turn the hips or shoulders as you rotate the arm backwards. Return the grip to neutral each rep.

Superman's Hands Overhead



- Start lying face down on the ground with the arms extended above the head about 45 degrees.
- With loose fists and the thumbs pointed upward, lift the hands up off the ground slightly and pull the shoulder blades back and down together, keeping the elbows extended.
- Return immediately to starting position, keeping the abdominals engaged throughout the range of motion.

***NOTE:** Make this exercise easier by holding the hands lower, at shoulder height.

Chin Tucks*



- Start lying on your back with the knees bent and feet on the floor shoulder width apart.
- Place a towel on the floor, folded to ~1-2 inches thickness, behind the head in the crook of the neck.
- Start with the chin lying naturally, then pull chin down toward the spine, pressing the neck against the towel.
- Hold for 1-2 seconds, holding proper posture with the core and low abs drawn in.
- Relax the chin to the starting position, and repeat until all reps are complete.

***NOTE:** You may also do this exercise seated with the legs crossed or standing with the back against a wall.

Planks



- Start on the elbows and the feet, and lift the hips in line with the shoulders, knees, and feet.
- Tuck the hips by pulling the bellow toward the spine. Keep the shoulders back and down and head in line with the spine.
- Hold this position with the hips tucked, shoulders back and down, and head neutral.

***TO MODIFY:** Place the knees on the floor.