

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

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Better Backs For Life - Part V

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- * Hamstring stretch
- * Standing dynamic torso spiral stretch
- * Scapular opening stretch

Brief Recap:

Part I: Generalized format for training/exercise sessions include:

1. an appropriate warm up and stretch cool down
2. sports, activity and muscle specific conditioning,
3. progressive strength and endurance
4. daily flexibility and posture awareness

Part II: POWER POSTURE SEQUENCE

1. Chin retraction
2. Shoulder - "Scapular Set"
3. "Hip-Rib" Check
4. "Glut Max" Squeeze

Parts III, IV & V: ACTIVE RANGE OF MOTION SEQUENCE (AROM):

- * Standing back extension
- * Hip extension - standing/upright
- * Hip-Hinge I
- * Hip-Hinge II
- * Hip flexion/extension combo conditioner
- * Seated core push-pull conditioner

Feature Exercise: Quadriceps Focus

Level One: Vertical Quadriceps Stretch "Stork Stand":

Start at Level One regardless of fitness level. This will ensure correct exercise execution. A warm pool (87 degrees plus) is most suitable for this stretch/active range of motion (AROM) exercise.

KEY POINTS:

- Keep body in alignment (one line through tips of ears, shoulders, hips, and knees).
- Reach heel towards gluteal.
- Keep knee facing away from body.
- Feel stretch in front of thigh and hip; lengthening all four quadriceps muscles.
- Keep hips in neutral.
- Activate abdominals and erector spinae - long back, open chest.

PROGRESSIONS:

Level One: Perform in shoulder depth water, holding on to edge of pool with one hand.

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Option: If participant cannot reach foot comfortably, use a partner, flotation belt or rope to guide foot. The partner may hold foot and gently guide it towards gluteal, with constant verbal feedback from participant. Or, participant may secure a rope or flotation belt around foot, hold on to both ends, bend knee and gently lift foot towards gluteals

- Standing leg is relaxed and extended with knee unlocked and foot firmly planted on floor.

Extra Technique Tips:

- Bent knee points directly to pool bottom (imagine knee cap has eyes and they are looking at pool bottom).
- Keep knees/thighs close together.
- Gently push "hip bone" (ischial tuberosity) forward on side which is stretching.

Level Two: As in Level One above, without holding pool edge. This requires strong activation of postural muscles and adds a stability or equilibrium component to the exercise thus improving balance.

Extra Technique Tips:

- Use free arm to balance by extending it to side or front of body, just below surface of water.

Level Three: As in Level Two above, add a forward lean with entire body. Lean body as a unit. This requires even stronger activation of postural muscles.

- Place free arm above head, in line with angle of body. Reach up, keep shoulder relaxed and fingers extended.
- From a side view, the body is in a straight line from tips of fingers, through tips of shoulders, through hip, through knee, leaning forward on an angle.

Extra Technique Tips:

- Activate gluteals on standing leg, keep hips level.
- Focus eyes straight ahead, on a fixed point on surface of water.

Level Four:

- Assume a prone "floating" position with body core activated. Hold on to edge of

pool, if necessary, or place a flotation device under belly, if it is difficult to keep body floating.

- Bring heel slowly toward gluteals, keep other leg relaxed and fully extended directly in line with floating body. Hold on to foot or ankle with hand (on same side as leg that is stretching).
- From a side view, body is in a straight line from tips of fingers, through tips of shoulders, through hip, through knee. Body is in a prone power posture position.

Extra Technique Tips:

- Keep body long and activated.
- Visualize front of hip opening.
- Relax quadriceps, feel stretch, let it happen.
- Hold for 8 - 32 seconds, depending on the temperature of water.
- Return to vertical position by releasing foot, then slowly tucking both knees to chest, reorienting body such that top of head faces ceiling, release knees and gently straighten legs under body, assume power posture position.
- To keep body warm consider performing a slow, full range of motion jumping jack arms and legs between stretches.

The key to all levels is slow controlled active range of motion. There is no hurry. In fact the slower the better for developing back strength.

Look for Abdominal Conditioning Series for Better Backs in the next issue (Part VI) of Wavelink.



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