

## Pregnancy Stretches



### Neck Stretch

**Begin by sitting cross-legged on a mat. Keep torso upright, shoulders down and back, and spine neutral.**

#### **Action**

With your left hand, gently grasp the left side of your head while reaching your opposite hand behind your back. Tilt head down towards shoulder until a gentle stretch is felt. Hold 15-30 seconds.

Repeat 2-3 times on each side.

### Spine Tuning

Begin on your hands and knees on a soft surface. Your knees should be directly below the hips, hands directly under the shoulders, head and spine in a neutral position.

#### **Action**

**INHALE:** Tuck your chin into your chest, drawing your lower abdomen in towards the spine as you round your back. Hold for 5-10 seconds.

**EXHALE:** Slowly return to the starting position.

Repeat 5 times.



### Full Body Stretch

Begin on your hands and knees, keeping hands directly underneath shoulders and knees underneath hips. Slowly straighten the knees as you lift your hips upward and lower your heels to the ground.

#### **Action**

Breathe steady as you lengthen through the spine and pull your shoulders down away from your ears. If your flexibility allows, lengthen through the arms and lower your chest, as if reaching it towards your feet (not pictured).

Hold stretch for 15-30 seconds and repeat 2-3 times.



### **Special Instructions**

Keep your head and neck in a neutral position, focusing your eyes behind you. Avoid this stretch during late pregnancy and early postpartum. Be careful when standing up to avoid dizziness. Instead, bend at the knees and lower them down to the floor so you are in the starting position before you push yourself back up to standing.

## Kegel Exercise

Imagine a 5-floor elevator tightening pelvic floor a little more at each level until it reaches the top; then release a little at each level until it reaches the bottom. Aim for 20 “Elevator” sets per day to see results.



### Inner Thigh

Begin standing with feet slightly wider than hips. Turn toes outward slightly.

#### **Action**

Keeping feet flat on the floor, squat straight down, holding onto a wall or sturdy chair for balance, if necessary. Place elbows on thighs, allowing hands to hang between your feet. Hold for 15-30 seconds.

Repeat 2-3 times.

#### **Special Instructions**

While in this position try tightening your pelvic floor 5 times.

### Hip Opener

Begin with both knees on the floor, and body upright. Use the floor or a low piece of furniture for balance (if necessary) and place your right foot in front of you, flat on the floor, knee bent. Your right knee should be directly over your right ankle, and your spine should be upright (pictured). Place your hands on your front thigh or on your hips.

#### **Action**

(Not pictured)

Keeping your torso upright, deepen the bend in your right knee (the knee may move in line with the toe at this point), and lean your hips forward. You should feel the stretch in your LEFT hip flexor (upper thigh). Hold for 15-30 seconds, switch sides.

Repeat 2-3 times.

#### **Special Instructions**

The movement is very small, so don't bend too far forward with the knee or the torso.

### Chest Stretch

Stand in the corner of a room, facing the walls, feet planted about 2-3 feet away from the corner. With feet flat and legs straight, place right palm on the right wall, left palm on the left wall, fingers pointing upward. Your wrists should be in line with your shoulders.

#### **Action**

Bending at the elbows, lower your body toward the corner, elbows pointing backward. You should feel this stretch across your chest and shoulders. Hold for 15-30 seconds.

Repeat 2 times.

#### **Special Instructions**

Keep spine in a neutral position and remember to breathe.

