

ON YOUR BACK

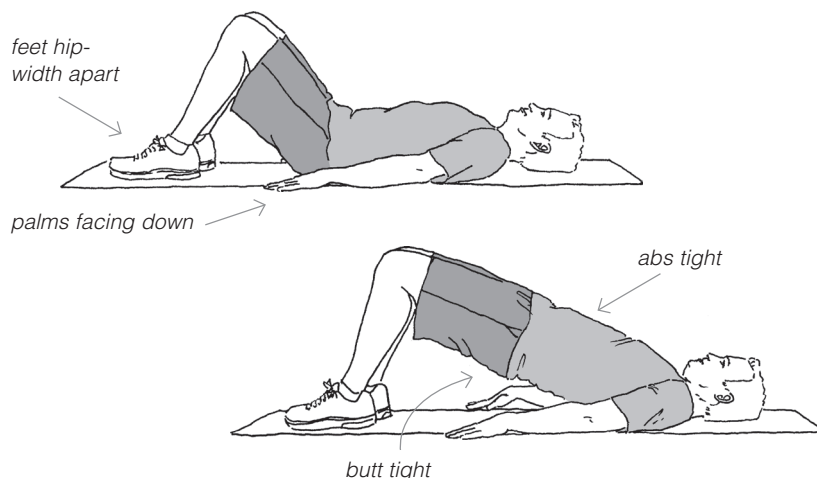
The Bridge

Step 1:

Lie on your back with both legs bent. Tighten your abs and squeeze your glutes. (If you like, you can put a pillow or a ball between your legs and squeeze it.) Lift your butt off the floor. Hold for five seconds.

Step 2:

Relax to the floor. Repeat. Do ten to fifteen of these. Go slow.



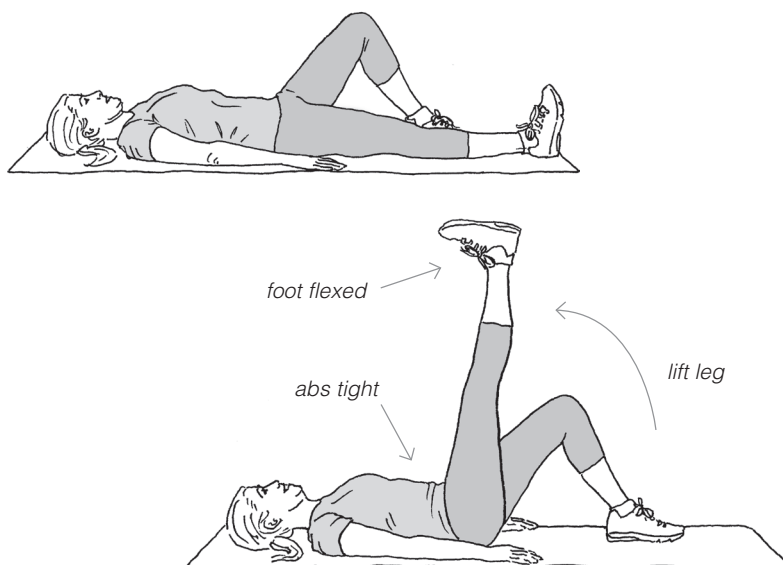
Leg Raise

Step 1:

Lie on your back, with one knee bent, foot on the floor, and the other leg straight. Tense the quad and flex the foot of the straight leg, then lift it upward, flexing at the hip until you feel a hamstring or calf stretch. Like a rubber band, it will "recoil" your leg back to the floor.

Step 2:

Do ten to fifteen times, then switch sides and repeat.



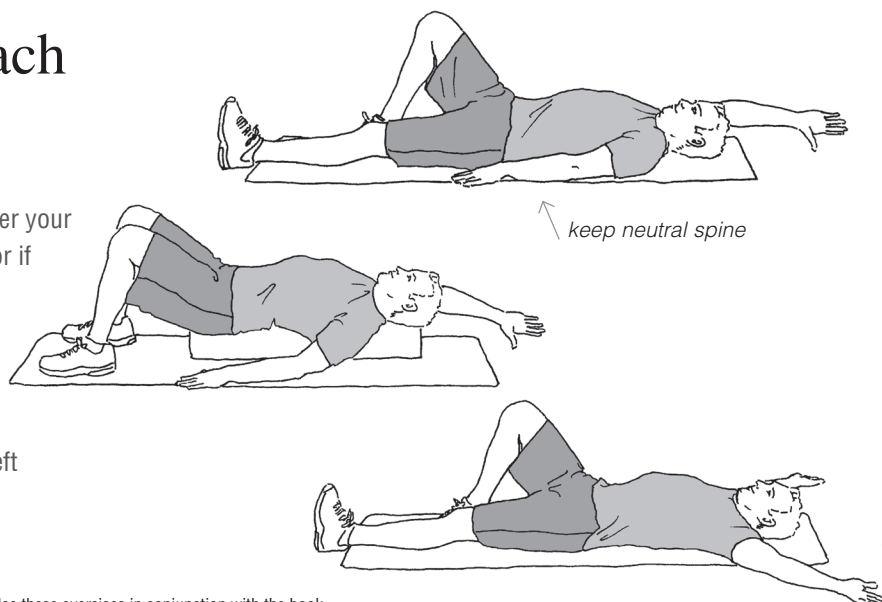
Shoulder/Overhead Reach (Dry Backstroke)

Step 1:

Lie on your back with one or both legs bent. Reach over your head with one arm as far as you can, touching the floor if you can. (Imagine a swimmer doing the backstroke.) Return the arm to your side. Keep your lower back quiet by tensing your abs.

Step 2:

Do the other arm, and continue to alternate between left and right ten to fifteen times each.

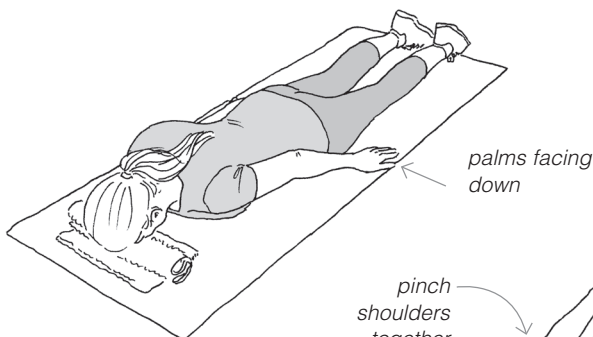


ON YOUR STOMACH

"I's" and "T's"

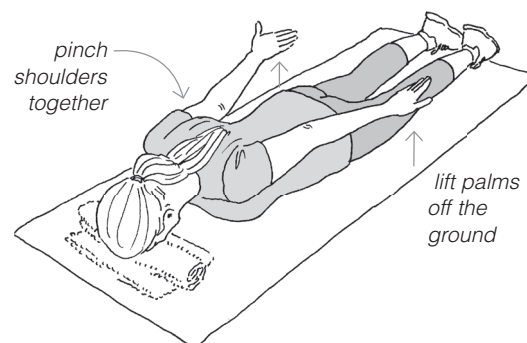
Step 1 ("I's"):

Lie on your stomach on the floor or a workout bench. Your head can be supported by a rolled-up towel or a small, calm dog (just kidding). With your arms at your sides, palms down, make the letter "I" with your body.



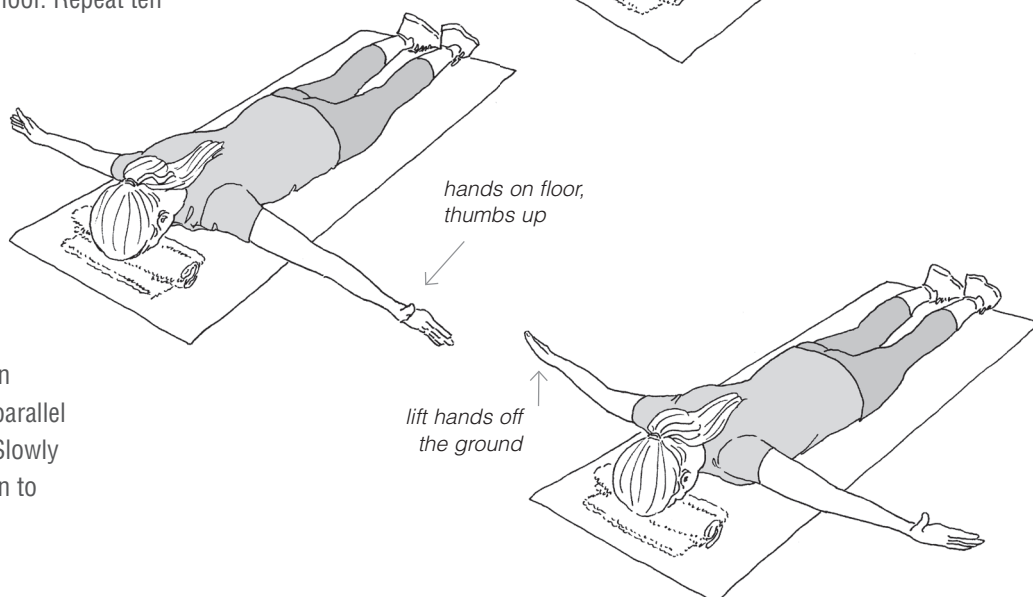
Step 2:

Pinch your shoulder blades back and down. Then lift both hands up until your arms are just above parallel to the floor. Hold for three seconds. Slowly bring your arms down until your hands touch the floor. Repeat ten to fifteen times.



Step 3 ("T's"):

Put your arms out to your sides, making a letter "T" with your body and head supported as described in step 1. Pinch your shoulder blades gently back and down; turn your arms so that your thumbs point upward. Then lift your arms until they are just above parallel with the floor. Hold for three seconds. Slowly return your arms to the floor. Repeat ten to fifteen times.

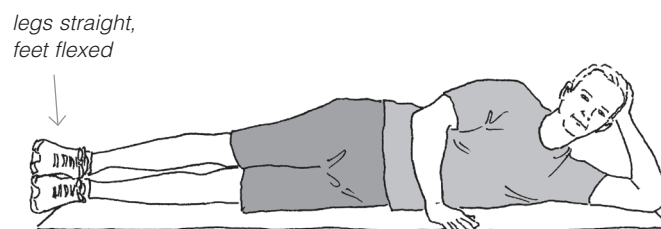


SIDE LIE

Side Leg Lift

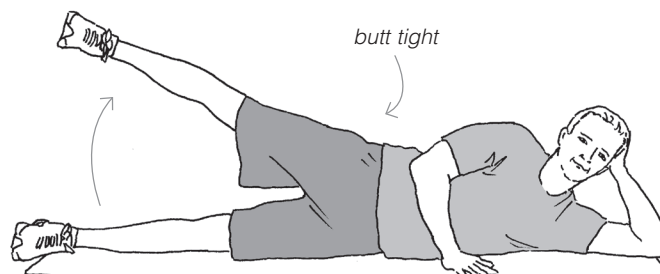
Step 1:

Lie on your side with both knees fully extended, feet flexed (pull toes up). Squeeze the glutes and tense the abs. Lift your top leg about 12 inches off the floor. Hold for five seconds. Keep your body straight and do not bend from the hip. There's no need to try to lift the leg high; the goal here is merely to activate the outer hip muscles. You should feel it right above your hip.



Step 2:

Lower your leg and repeat the movement ten times on each side.

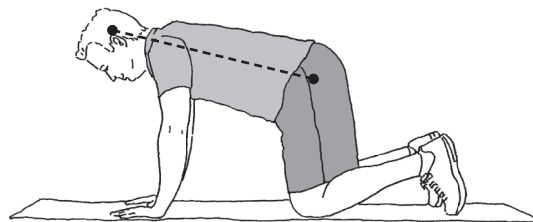


ON ALL FOURS (AS IN A CRAWL)

Cat and Camel

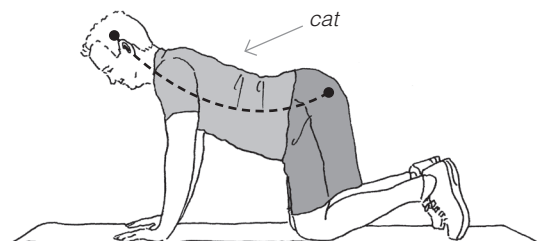
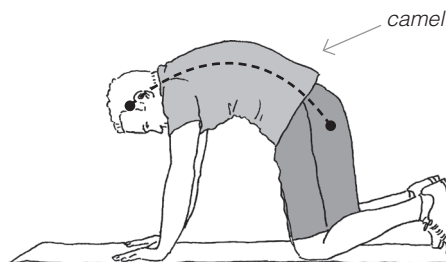
Step 1:

Get on all fours, like a crawling baby. Slowly round the low and mid back by tilting the pelvis (camel). Hold for a couple of seconds.



Step 2:

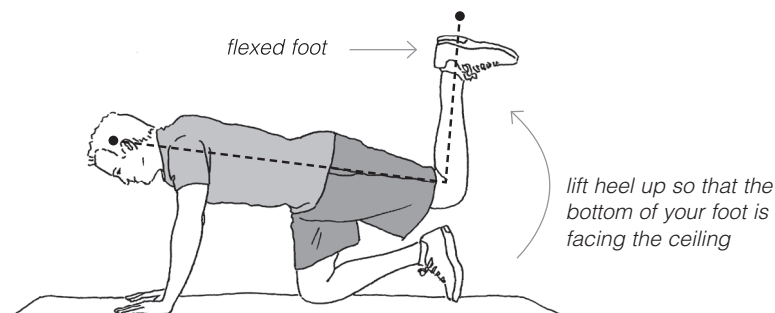
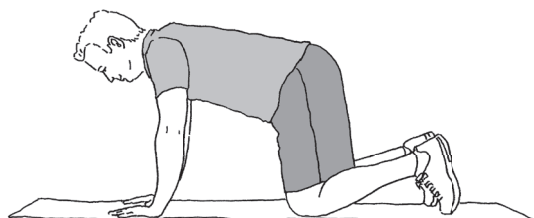
Reverse into the opposite direction until your back is arched (cat). Hold for a couple of seconds.



Heel Extension

Step 1:

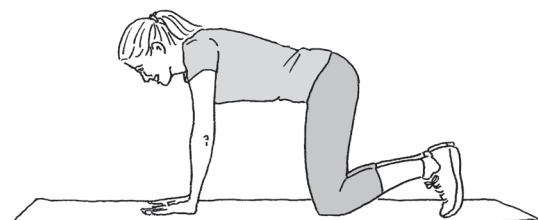
On all fours, extend the heel of one leg (with the knee flexed to 90 degrees) to the ceiling. Keep your lower back still by tensing your abs. Do ten reps at a slow to moderate speed. No jerky movements on this one. Repeat on the other leg.



Opposing Arm and Leg Reach

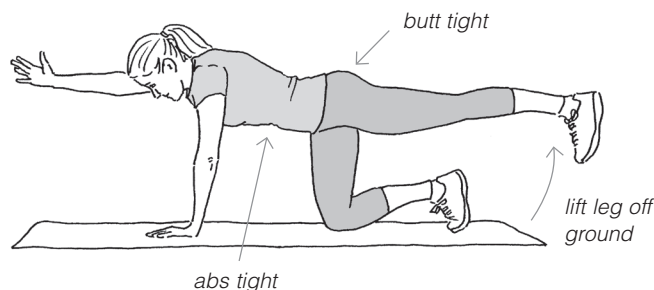
Step 1:

In a crawling position, tense your abdominals and keep your low back quiet. Then reach way out with one hand and reach way back with the opposite foot. Hold for five seconds with each reach. Activate all the muscles of the core, hip, and shoulder girdle.



Step 2:

Return your hand and foot to the floor. Attempt to keep your back still. This exercise is best done by alternating between your left and right sides, not by doing all on one side and then all on the other.



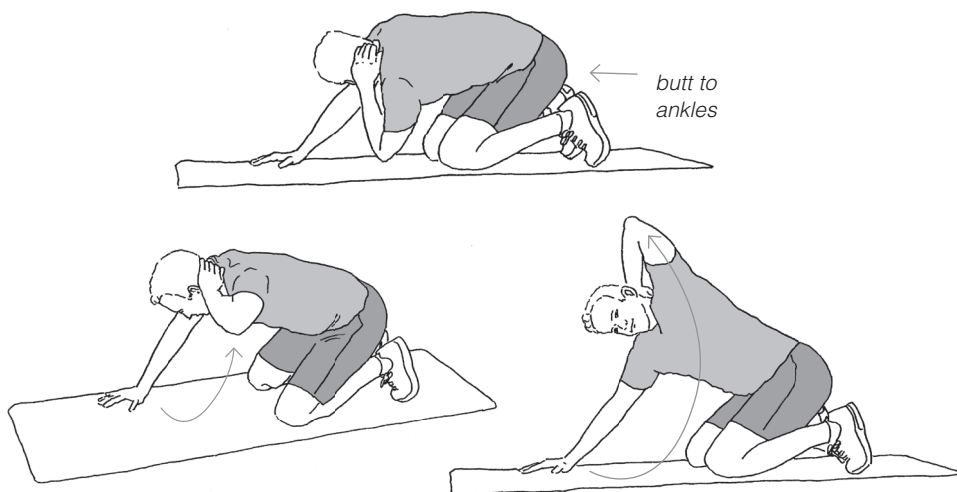
Middle Back Mobility Turn

Step 1:

Start on all fours, then drop your butt down to your ankles. Put your left arm behind your head. Turn your upper body slowly to the right, then to the left.

Step 2:

Repeat with your right hand behind your head.



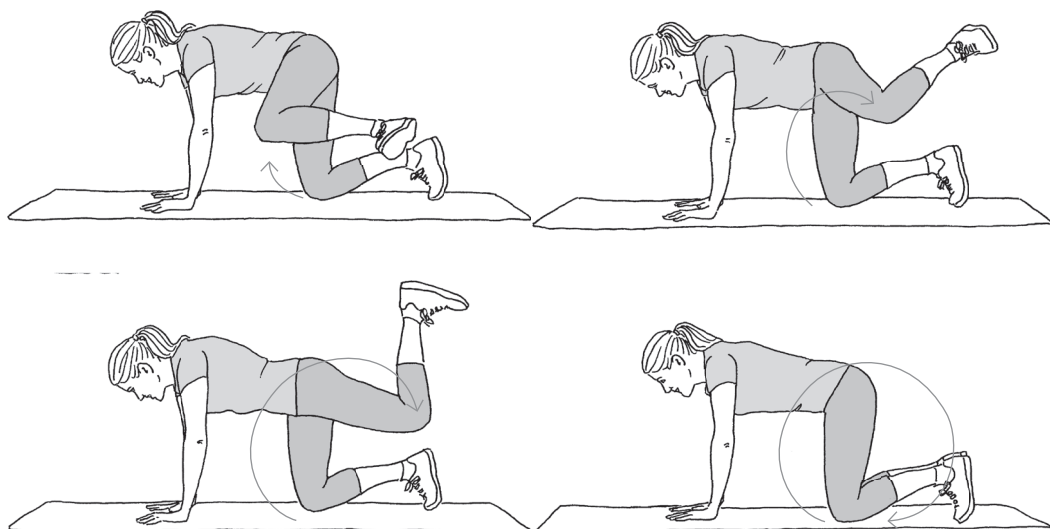
Hip Circles

Step 1:

On all fours, kick one leg back in a circular pattern. Do ten clockwise, on one side; then ten counterclockwise. Keep the low back still. As your mobility improves over time, increase the size of your circles.

Step 2:

Repeat on the other side.



HALF-KNEELING

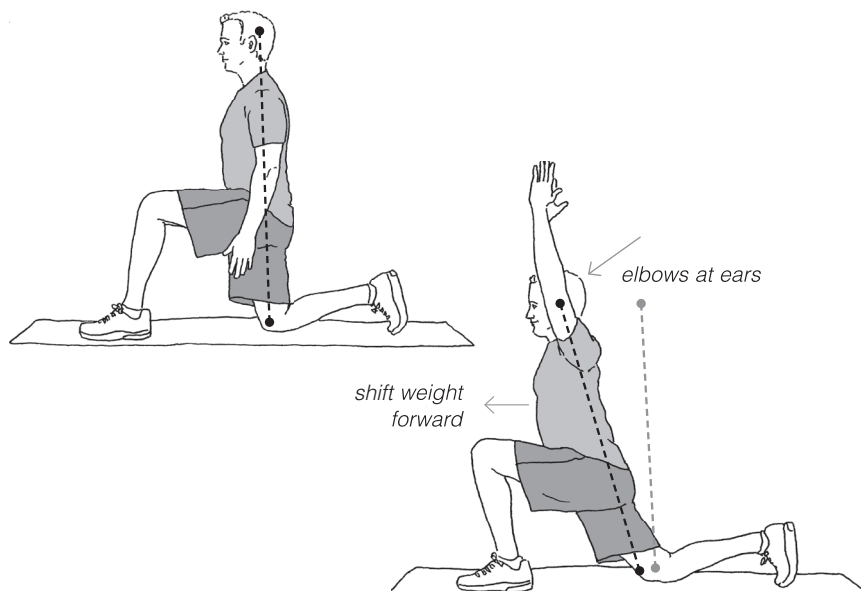
Half-Kneeling Stretch

Step 1:

Kneel down with one knee on the floor and the other leg and foot out in front. (You may want to put a towel or pad under the knee.) Tense your abs and glutes and shift your weight forward onto your front leg while lifting your arms overhead. You should feel a stretch on the front of your rear leg. Hold for three to five seconds.

Step 2:

Bring your arms to your sides and shift your weight to your rear leg. Do ten reps on each side.

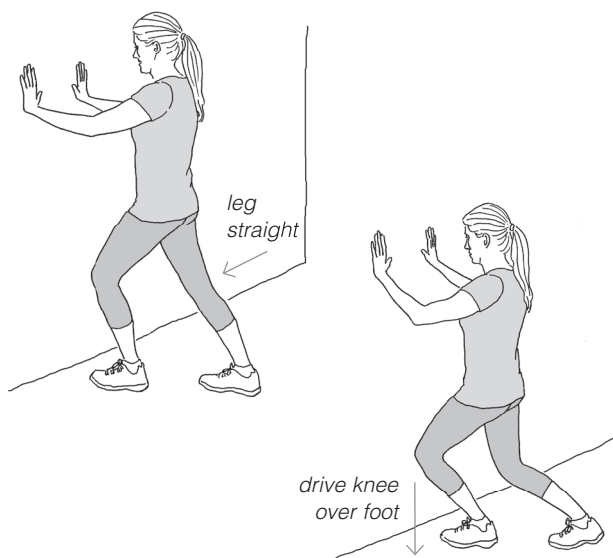


STANDING

Ankle Flex

Step 1:

Stand facing a wall. Bring one foot forward to a point within 6 inches of the wall. Bend the knee slightly. Your back leg should be about a foot or two behind your front leg (which is the one being stretched and mobilized). Put both hands against the wall. Try to drop most of your weight onto the flexed front foot. Flex the knee farther by driving the front foot toward the wall. Do not let your heel come up or slide inward; keep your feet facing straight ahead. Drive the knee over the center of the foot. Do fifteen reps.



Step 2:

Switch sides and repeat.

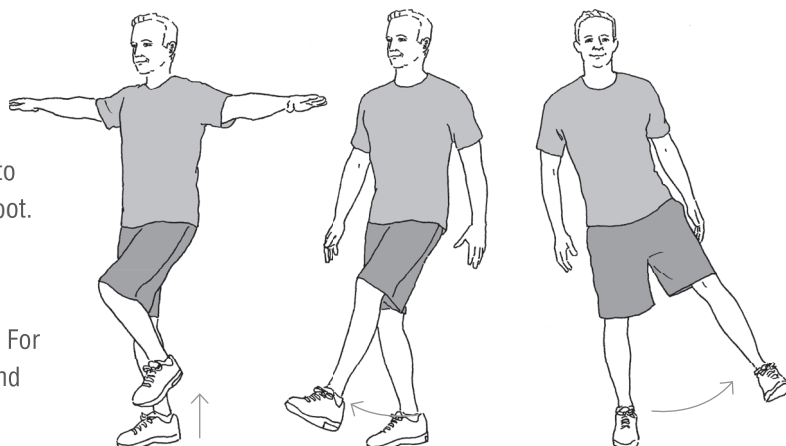
Balance on One Leg

Step 1:

Stand tall; activate your quads, glutes, and abs. Pull your shoulders back ("military posture," if that helps). Spread your arms out wide and lift up one foot a few inches off the floor; try to maintain your balance for fifteen seconds. Repeat on the other foot.

Step 2:

When you can hold for fifteen seconds, challenge yourself more. First, drop your hands to your sides. Next, try closing your eyes. For the ultimate balance challenge, try swinging the lifted leg back and forth and from side to side. Your balance *will* improve.



Squat and Reach

Step 1:

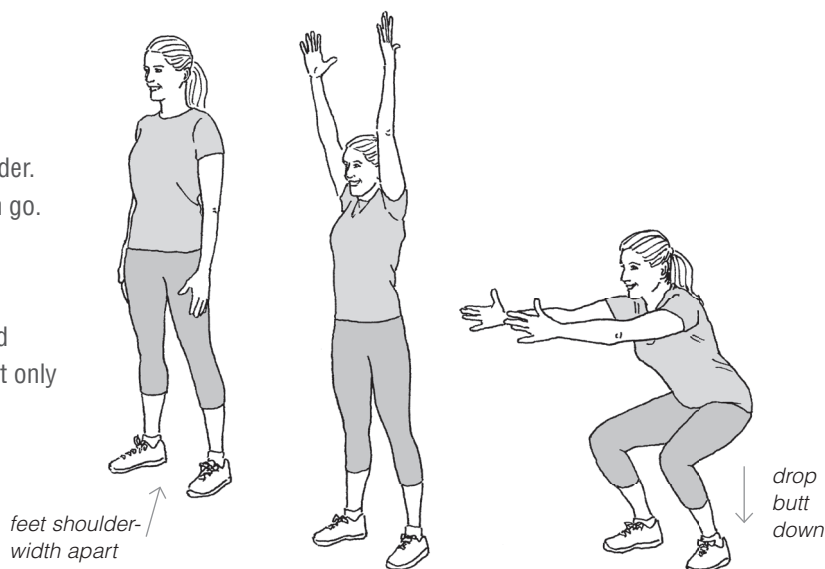
Stand tall, with your feet shoulder-width apart or slightly wider. Now *reach* to the ceiling with your arms as high as they can go. *Really reach.*

Step 2:

Now bring your hands down, bend your hips and knees, and move into a nice squat. Touch the floor with your hands, but only if you can do so without rounding your back.

Step 3:

Stand tall again; reach to the ceiling and squat again.



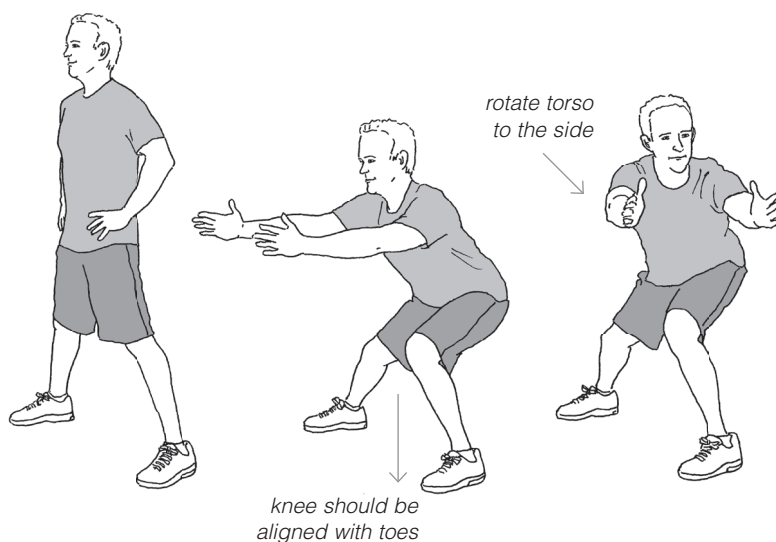
Squat with Weight Shift

Step 1:

Stand with your feet as much as twice shoulder-width apart. Squat down halfway; then begin shifting your weight way over, either to the left or the right leg. As you shift your weight over to one leg, bend that knee and hip farther while keeping your feet facing forward and your knee in close alignment with the foot. Reach forward with both arms at the same time and sink your butt slightly back.

Step 2:

Shift your weight way over to the other leg, now bending that knee and reaching forward with your arms. Then reach out to the side, with your arms over the foot onto which you are shifting your weight.



Fast Footwork

Step 1:

Start with simple marching in place for ten seconds. Lift your knees high. Pump your arms. Start slow; get fast.

Step 2:

Do this same high stepping for another ten seconds, at speed. Go for it. As you get more at home with this, add a little bounce to your step until you are jogging in place.

Step 3:

When you really get into it (if you do), consider *springing* from side to side (see illustration). Someday, we hope, your feet are going to be *flying*.

