

## Low Back/Core/Outer Hips



Bridge: Lay on your back and walk your feet as close to your hips as possible, keeping the feet hip distance apart. Place your hands alongside your body. Press the knees forward and lift the hips high, engaging the core, hamstrings and glutes. Inhale when lifting, exhale coming down. Either hold for 10-20 seconds or do 10-20 repetitions.



Marching Bridge: From Bridge Pose, lift one foot a few inches off the ground, release, and repeat on the other foot. Try 5 times on each side, increasing or decreasing as needed. The most important thing here is to keep the hips up; if one or both hips drop, your body is compensating in some way. March with the breath, inhaling up and exhaling down.



Stability Twists: Begin laying on your back with your arms in a “T” position, palms facing down. Bring the knees into the chest, inhaling. As you exhale, drop the knees to one side until they are hovering over the ground, then inhale and bring the knees back to center. Do 5 times on each side. When you have finished the repetitions, rest the knees for a gentle twist, holding 20-30 seconds on each side and relaxing into the pose fully (so no muscles are active).

For added outer hip strengthening, lift the top leg a few inches from the bottom leg while in the twist:







Knee Hover: Start in Table with the knees directly under the hip points, the wrists directly under the shoulders, and a neutral spine. Curl the toes under, inhale, then hover the knees off the ground and hold for 5 seconds. The breath is also held during the 5 seconds; as each second passes, engage the abdominals, obliques, and back muscles harder. Exhale and release down. Immediately come back up on the next inhale. Do 3 times total then rest.



OR



Child's Pose (resting position): This can be done after any exercise for 30 seconds – 10 minutes (recommended). It's a slow release of the low back and outer hips. Begin kneeling with the knees mat distance apart and the big toes touching. Sit back on your heels and walk the hands forward, resting the head on the mat. If this is uncomfortable or inaccessible, modify by placing a block/pillows/towels under the hips or under the forehead. Take slow, deep breaths and soften all muscles to settle into relaxation.





**Sunbird:** Begin in Table position; knees directly under the hip points, wrists directly under the shoulders, and with a neutral spine. Raise the (Left) leg so that it is in line with the spine, keeping the hips parallel to the mat (it helps to spin the big toe inward). Lift the (Right) arm, palm facing inward. Inhale as you extend the hand and foot away from each other, exhale as you round the spine and bring the knee and elbow to touch. Keep the deep abdominals engaged through the entire movement. Do 5 times, repeat on the opposite side, then rest.



**Easier:** Only move the legs, using the arms to help stabilize.

**Harder (glutes):** Take the arm and leg out to the side each repetition.





**Back Twist:** Start seated with the legs extended in front. Place the (Right) foot on the ground outside of the (Left) knee. Keep the (Left) foot flexed. Place the (Left) hand/elbow/back of arm on the outside of the (Right) knee. Place the (Right) hand behind you and twist to the (Right). Engage the deep abdominals to pull the naval towards the (Right) thigh and lift the chest. Inhale, softening the pelvis down and lifting the spine, exhale and deepen the twist, keeping the abs engaged. Take 5 breaths in this manner. Rest by relaxing the legs in front and dropping the chin to the chest for “ragdoll” pose.



**Outer Hip/IT Band Stretch with Strap:** On your back, wrap the strap or belt around the (Left) ball of the foot and hold the strap in the (Right) hand. Cross the (Left) leg over to the right until you feel a stretch (the foot may end up resting on the ground). Drop the (Left) hip towards the (Right) foot to square the hips up and deepen the stretch. Hold 10-20 seconds then switch sides.





Easy Seated Hip Stretch: Bend the (Right) leg in front of the (Left) leg and lean forward without rounding the back. You may feel a stretch without leaning forward.

If you cannot sit in this position while maintaining a straight spine, sit on a block, bolster, or folded up towels/blankets to help tilt the pelvis forward. Hold 20 seconds – 3 minutes and switch sides.



As you hold longer, try to focus in on the part of the hip where the stretch is most intense. See if you can soften that area.





**Reclining Pigeon Outer Hip Stretch:**  
Start by laying on the back, knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Place the (Left) ankle on top of the (Right) knee, keeping the (Left) ankle slightly flexed. You may feel a stretch here. If not, pull the (Right) knee into the chest, snaking the (Left) arm through the space between your legs to interlace the hands around the back of the (Right) thigh, shin, or knee. To deepen, push the (Left) knee away and pull the (Right) knee closer. Hold 30 – 60 seconds then switch sides.



If Reclining Pigeon is not accessible, you can modify by doing the pose in a seated position, using your hands to support your upper body. To deepen, bring the legs and torso closer together.