

Back Exercises

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‘Dart’ – Thoracic Extension Stretch

This exercise is both a stretch and a strengthening exercise. It is designed to help you to have a straighter *thoracic* (mid-back) region, and also to have improved back muscle endurance. This means you can hold your back straight for prolonged periods without becoming tired. This is particularly important for people with an excessive *kyphosis* (rounded thoracic spine)



Exercise

The stretch is best done on a firm surface such as a yoga mat, carpet or firm bench. Place a pillow down first, and lie on your stomach with the pillow just above your hips. This will support your lower back and stop the stretch going too far down.

Place your arms by your sides, palms facing down. Do the exercise in this sequence:

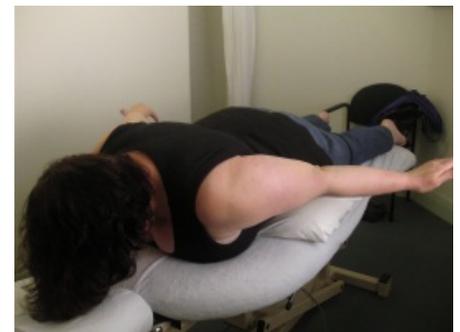
1. Gently tuck your chin inwards (making your neck a bit longer at the back), & lift your head slightly off the bench.
2. Gently pull your shoulder blades together, and raise your arms straight up by your sides. Only lift them a few inches (approx.10cm), & keep your elbows straight.
3. Lift your upper body just a few centimeters.

Hold this position for the count of two slow deep breaths, then slowly lower yourself back to the starting position. Rest for 1 breath.

Repeat this movement 10 times. Rest 30 seconds, and do it all again for 2 more sets of 10.

Points to note:

- You should not feel strain in your low back, just pressure or moderate muscular effort through your shoulder blades & mid-back.
- If you have difficulty completing the exercise, start by holding the position for one breath, and do less repetitions. Slowly increase as you are able.



If you would like a printable copy of this exercise, please email us at: info@cssphysio.com.au

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