

Before you even get out of bed, throw back the covers and try these stretches to get you moving in the morning. As with all exercise, be mindful of your body and only stretch to a comfortable point, to feel resistance, NOT PAIN. Remember, stretching should feel good.

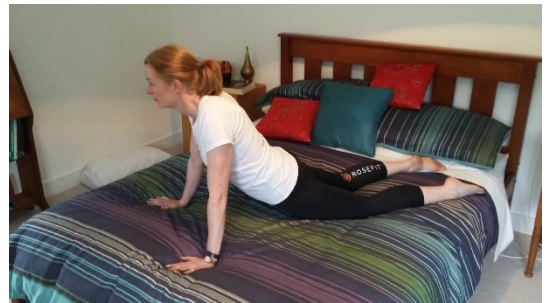
1. Spinal twist – to release the lower back muscles

Lie on your back with legs straight and arms stretched out to the side in a T. Swing your right leg up and over your left leg, twisting at the hip, and let the right leg lie at a 90° angle. Try to keep your shoulders in contact with the bed. Turn your head to look in the opposite direction to the bent leg. Take a few deep breaths and relax. Repeat on the other side.



2. Cobra - to open the chest and boost circulation

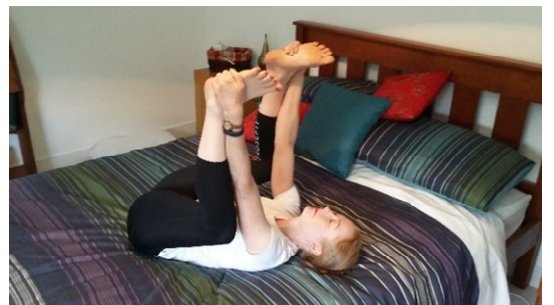
Lie on your stomach with your toes flat on the bed and forehead resting on the bed. Place your palms on the bed under your shoulders and keep your elbows parallel and close to your body. Inhale and slowly lift your head, chest and abdomen but keep your pubic bone on the bed. Keep a slight bend in the elbows and be careful not to overextend your back. Look straight ahead and keep your shoulders away from your ears. As you exhale, lower back down. Rest and repeat four to five times.



You can adapt this pose by keeping your forearms on the bed and raising only your head and chest (sphinx pose).

3. Happy Baby – stretch hip joints and lower back

Lie on your back on your bed and pull your knees into your chest. Place your hands on the outside blades of your feet and open your knees wider than shoulder-width apart. Keep your back pressed into the mat as much as possible. Press your feet into hands while pulling down on your feet, creating resistance. Do this one leg at a time of both together.



4. Piriformis stretches - buttocks

Lay on your back and bend both knees with the feet flat on the floor. Place the outer foot of the right leg onto the lower thigh/knee of the left leg. Grip behind the knee or thigh of the left leg and pull this knee in towards your chest. You should feel a stretch in the buttock. Hold this position for 30 seconds then swop sides. (can be done in bed!)



5. Pec stretch- open the chest

Sit on your heels with knees bent. Stretch your arms behind you and clasp your hands together. Lift your hands as high as possible, squeeze your shoulder blades together and open your chest. (Can be done from a standing position)



6. Standing side reach

Try to elongate your body by creating the greatest amount of distance possible between your left pinkie and your left heel. Hold for 15 seconds, then switch sides.

