

Upper Back Flexibility Test and Stretch

Thoracic Spine Flexibility Stretch

Purposes

- To test and improve the flexibility of the upper back.
- To improve the ability to make posture changes.
- To facilitate redistribution of spine loading.
- To reduce strain at the neck and low back
- To stretch the shoulder blade muscles.
- To improve support of the head and shoulders when sitting.

Starting Position: Lie on a firm surface with a towel roll across the back at the bottom of the shoulder blades.

Use a pillow as needed to support head so forehead is level

Bend one or both knees so the low back is comfortably flat.

Place the towel roll where the backward curve of the upper back is the largest. Any area from the top edge of the shoulder blades to 2 – 3 inches below the blades may benefit.

The size of the towel roll needed will depend on the firmness of the surface and the stiffness of the back. A length-wise folded and rolled pillow case covered with a hand-towel makes a firm roll.

The irritability and stiffness of the upper back area will determine how large a towel is tolerated and how long to stretch initially.

___ **Modification A (Wand Stretch):** (not shown) hold a 12 inch stick in hands and stretch overhead. Hold for 2 minutes at a time.

___ **Modification B (Windmill):** hold light dumbbells (___ lbs) in hands. Reach for ceiling. Swing alternately one hand overhead and the other toward feet, in a 12 to 18 inch arc, rhythmically.

Special Instructions: Perform as checked

___ Lay in this position for 30 seconds at a time

___ Lay in this position for 15 minutes at a time ___ times a day.

___ Lay in this position before falling asleep

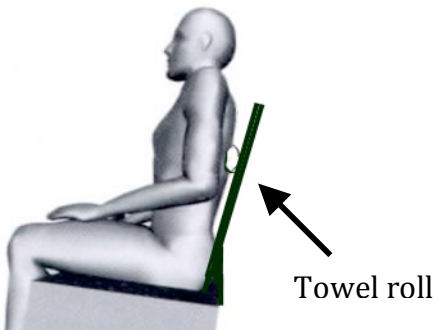
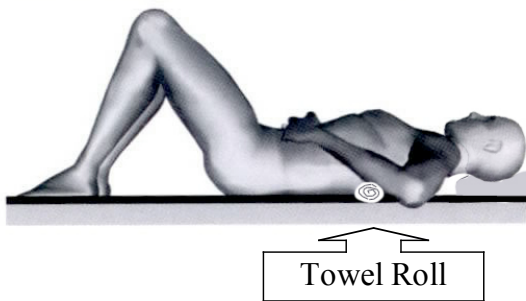
___ Sit and drive with the towel roll (as shown)

Repetitions:

___ Use lying and sitting as needed to relieve stiffness

___ Use 15 minutes ___ times a day for ___ weeks.

___ Use indefinitely



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