

Supported Corpse Stretch



1. Lie face up with your arms outstretched and palms face up on a supportive object 3 to 6 inches thick. A foam roller is a good tool.
2. Make sure your support is under your hip bones, NOT your lower back.
3. Straighten your knees until they are completely open and below your hips.
4. Spend 2 to 5 minutes trying to “turn off” every muscle in your body.
5. When done DO NOT SIT UP, but rather bridge gently (use your legs to lift your hips) and move the roller or other support out from under you and gently lower your hips to the floor.
6. Spend a few minutes doing a “systems check” while lying on the floor and gently moving your legs, doing bridges, dropping your knees to either side, and just resetting how you stabilize your spine & hips.
7. If you feel tension in your hips or back when you do this stretch then that is your cue to do it every night before you go to bed until you no longer feel that tension. Once you no longer feel any tension when doing this stretch, try it once every two weeks to assess whether you need to practice this again.

This stretch lengthens the hip flexors. Because one of the hip flexors (the psoas) attaches to your lumbar spine this stretch can make your lower & mid back feel tight as you lower your knees below your hips (as pictured above). Your psoas muscle also attaches to the upper inside part of your thigh bones and as you straighten and lower your knees a tight psoas will pull at the upper bones where it is attached (namely, your lower back). Your diaphragm also attaches to the upper three vertebrae of your lower back and if your psoas is really tight it can make it hard to breathe.

Bend your knees (pictured at right) every 20 or 30 seconds to relieve mid-back or lower back discomfort as you do this stretch if you find it hard to breathe with your knees straight & below your hips. Gradually you will feel less tension as you straighten your legs.

