

# SPINE STRETCH

- 1 Lie on your back with your left leg straight and your right leg bent, placing your right foot on your left shin.



## BEST FOR

- quadratus lumborum
- erector spinae
- vastus lateralis
- tractus iliotibialis
- tensor fasciae latae

- 2 Keeping both shoulders on the floor, slowly bring your right leg across your body until you feel the stretch in the area between your lower back and hips. Stretch only as far as your shoulders will allow without one of them rising from the floor.



- 3 Hold for fifteen seconds, and repeat the sequence three times on each side.

## DO IT RIGHT

### DO

- Relax your lower back.

### AVOID

- Allowing your shoulders to lift off the floor.

## QUICK GUIDE

### TARGET

- Lower back

### TYPE

- Flexibility

### LEVEL

- Beginner

### BENEFITS

- Increases lower-back flexibility

### NOT ADVISABLE IF YOU HAVE

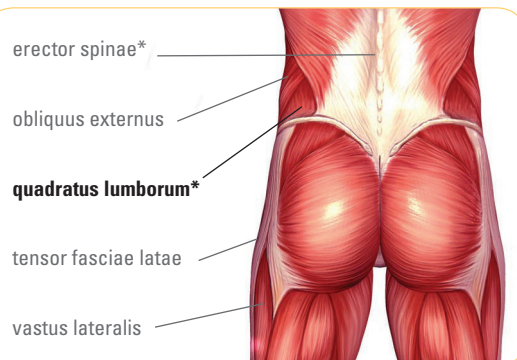
- Severe lower-back pain

### ANNOTATION KEY

**Bold text indicates active muscles**

Gray text indicates stabilizing muscles

\* indicates deep muscles



# LOWER-BACK ROTATION

## LUMBAR

- 1 Lie flat on the floor with both feet and knees together, and your knees bent.



### BEST FOR

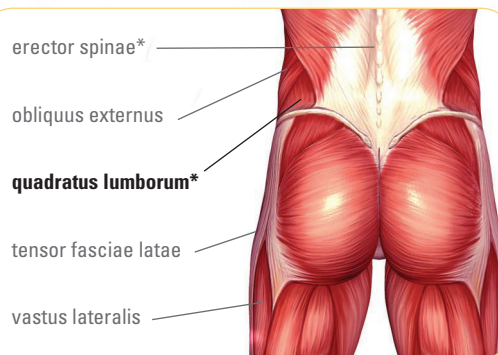
- quadratus lumborum
- erector spinae
- obliquus externus

### ANNOTATION KEY

**Bold text indicates active muscles**

Gray text indicates stabilizing muscles

\* indicates deep muscles



### QUICK GUIDE

#### TARGET

- Lower back

#### TYPE

- Flexibility

#### LEVEL

- Beginner

#### BENEFITS

- Increases lower-back flexibility

#### NOT ADVISABLE IF YOU HAVE

- Severe lower-back pain

### DO IT RIGHT

#### DO

- Keep your lower back and shoulders on the floor.

#### AVOID

- Bouncing while stretching—move slowly and smoothly.



- 2 Slowly rock your knees from side to side until you feel a stretch along your lower back through the hips or until your knees reach the floor.

- 3 Hold the stretch for thirty seconds, and then switch sides. Repeat three times on each side.

# SWIMMING

1 Lie prone on the floor with your legs hip-width apart. Stretch your arms upward beside your ears on the floor. Engage your pelvic floor, and draw your belly button in toward your spine.

2 Extend through your upper back as you lift your left arm and right leg simultaneously. Lift your head and shoulders off the floor.

3 Lower your arm and leg to the starting position, maintaining a stretch in your limbs throughout.



4 Extend your right arm and left leg off the floor, lengthening and lifting your head and shoulders.

5 Elongate your limbs as you return to the starting position. Repeat six to eight times.



## QUICK GUIDE

### TARGET

- Spinal extensors
- Hip extensors

### TYPE

- Stability/strengthening

### LEVEL

- Intermediate

### BENEFITS

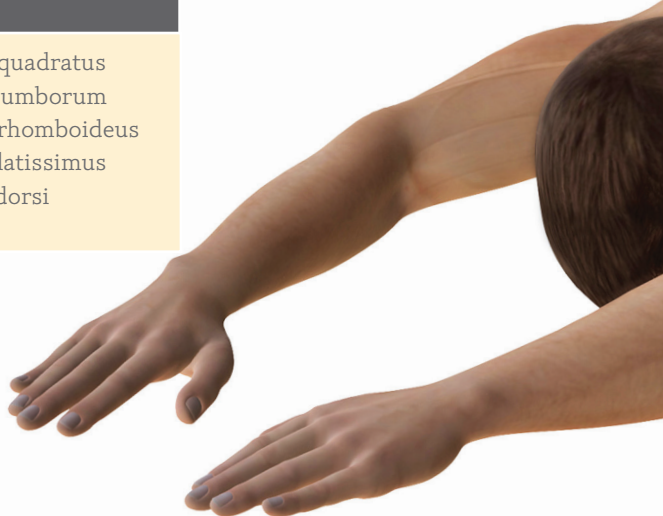
- Strengthens hip and spine extensors
- Challenges stabilization of the spine against rotation

### NOT ADVISABLE IF YOU HAVE

- Severe lower-back pain
- Extreme curvature of the upper spine
- Curvature of the lower spine

## BEST FOR

- |                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| • gluteus maximus | • quadratus lumborum |
| • trapezius       | • rhomboideus        |
| • biceps femoris  | • latissimus dorsi   |
| • erector spinae  |                      |



**MODIFICATION**

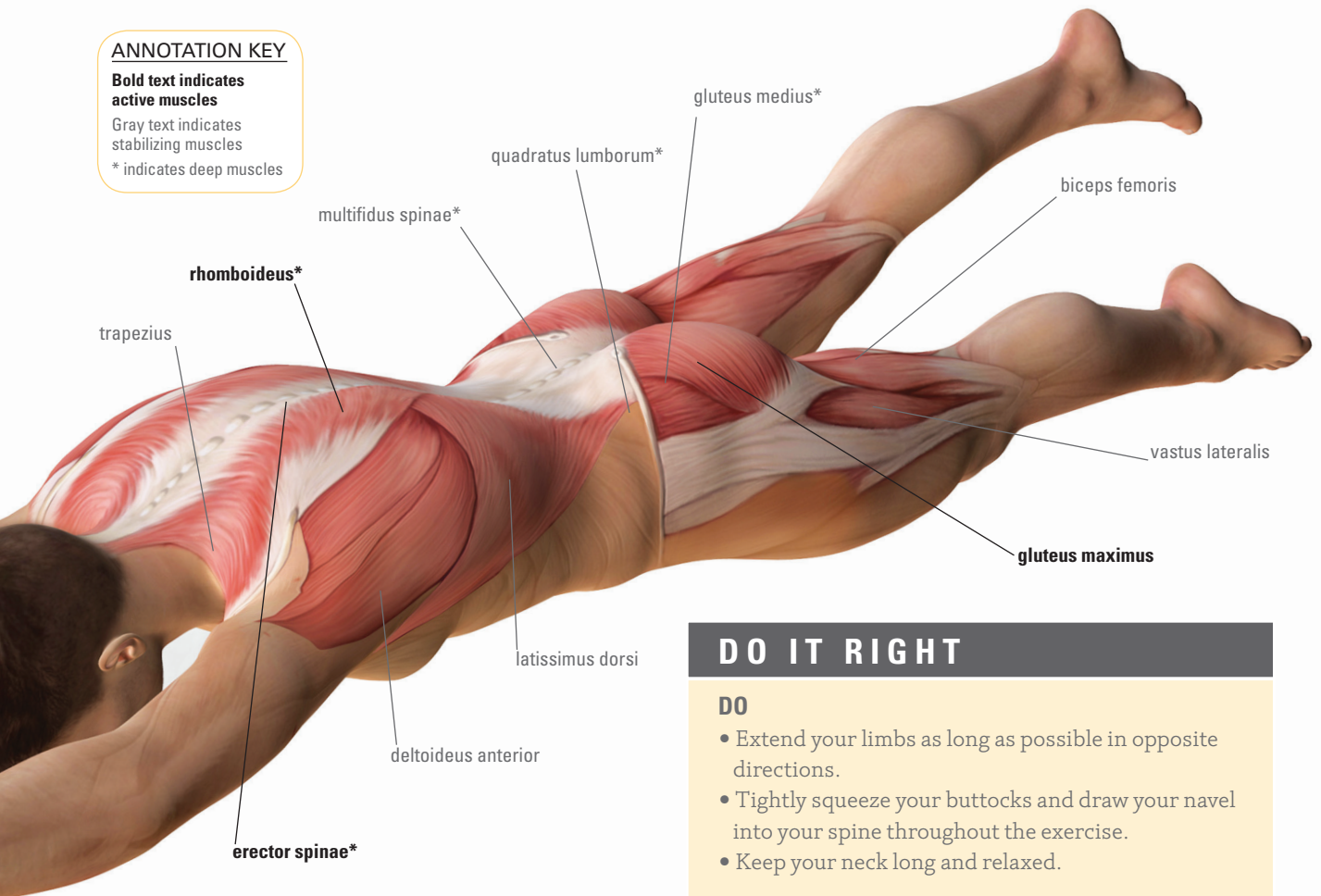
**More difficult:** Instead of lifting the opposite leg and arm, lift both arms and legs simultaneously, continuing to draw your navel into your spine. This version of the exercise is commonly known as the Superman.

**ANNOTATION KEY**

**Bold text indicates active muscles**

Gray text indicates stabilizing muscles

\* indicates deep muscles

**DO IT RIGHT****DO**

- Extend your limbs as long as possible in opposite directions.
- Tightly squeeze your buttocks and draw your navel into your spine throughout the exercise.
- Keep your neck long and relaxed.

**AVOID**

- Allowing your shoulders to lift toward your ears.

# BRIDGE

- 1 Lie supine on the floor. Bend your knees and draw your heels close to your buttocks. Place your hands flat on the floor by your sides.



## BEST FOR

- erector spinae
- iliopsoas
- gluteus maximus
- gluteus medius
- sartorius
- rectus femoris

## QUICK GUIDE

### TARGET

- Lower back
- Quadriceps
- Gluteal muscles
- Chest

### TYPE

- Strengthening

### LEVEL

- Intermediate

### BENEFITS

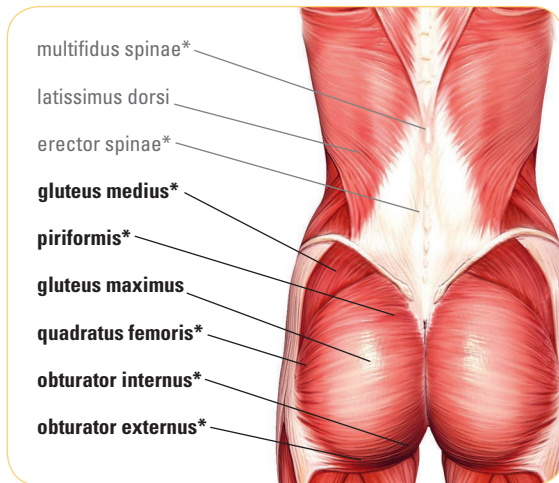
- Strengthens thighs and buttocks
- Stretches chest and spine

### NOT ADVISABLE IF YOU HAVE

- Shoulder injury
- Back injury
- Neck issues

- 2 Exhale, and press down through your feet to lift your buttocks off the floor. With your feet and thighs parallel, push your arms into the floor while extending through your fingertips.
- 3 Lengthen your neck away from your shoulders. Lift your hips higher so that your torso rises from the floor.
- 4 Hold for thirty seconds to one minute. Exhale as you release your spine onto the floor, one vertebra at a time. Repeat at least one more time.





#### ANNOTATION KEY

**Bold text indicates active muscles**

Gray text indicates stabilizing muscles

\* indicates deep muscles

#### DO IT RIGHT

##### DO

- Roll your shoulders under once your hips are raised.
- Keep your knees over your heels.
- Tighten your buttocks and your thighs.

##### AVOID

- Tucking your chin in toward your chest.
- Using your buttocks more than your hamstrings to lift your hips.

