

# Warm-up Stretches

Posture: feet parallel, heels as close together as comfortable, roll shoulders up and back and down, lift rib cage a bit, and to release pelvis and lower back completely pull navel up and back. Keep this posture while doing stretches!

- 1) Bring hands over head
  - a. Grasp right hand with left and pull it back, then switch and grasp left hand with right and pull back.
  - b. Drop right hand behind head and down to the palm touching the back, grasp right elbow with left hand and pull elbow back, raise right hand to overhead and repeat on other side.
  - c. Lower right ribs down to right hip to allow a good stretch along left side, hold a few seconds, then return to upright using the left obliques (side muscles), repeat on other side. Repeat both sides two more times.
- 2) Bring arms down and pull right arm across front with left hand on upper right arm and wiggle fingers, release by swing both arms down and slightly back, then repeat stretch on other side.
- 3) Bring arms up to sides with palms facing each other and hold then release palms to face outward and hold, repeat several times.
- 4) Roll head from side to side several times, bring to center and lift to neutral.
- 5) Shoulder rolls, first forward then backward
- 6) Chest lifts, use lats (back muscles under shoulder blades) to lift rib cage, then release. Repeat 10-12 times.
- 7) Diaphragm lifts, pull upper abdominals in and lift up as hard as you can through the diaphragm, hold as long as you can. This should make it hard to breathe but continue to breathe. Release and take a deep breathe. Repeat 2 more times.
- 8) In standing position, grasp right foot from behind with right hand and reach backward with foot to stretch quadriceps (front leg muscles) hold. If balance is good, center your weight, lift free hand overhead, then extend free hand forward while extending back foot and hand toward the ceiling. Hold for a few seconds then release. Repeat on other side.
- 9) Squats, spread feet wide enough apart to allow flexibility of knees over (but not past) toes. Keeping back in dance posture, inhale as you bring arms overhead and bend knees to over the toes. Exhale as you turn to standing. Repeat 10 times.
- 10) Parallel back squats, while in the squatting position from above, keep lower belly strong while moving back parallel to the floor and resting elbows on thighs. Now, keeping back parallel to the floor and using elbows to keep knees pointing toward toes, lift back away from floor then lower towards floor. Repeat 10 times.

- 11) Lunges, step forward with right foot then back with left foot. Bend right leg into a lunge but do not extend knee over toes, keep dance posture in torso, lift arms over head palms facing towards each other, and hold for a few seconds. Step feet closer together, straighten front leg and flex foot with weight on bent back leg. Bend forward using hands on thigh, shin, or floor for balance. Bend both legs and roll up to standing. Repeat on other side.
- 12) Spread feet again, but keep them parallel. Keeping lower belly strong and back straight, bend over to rest hands on floor (if hands don't reach the floor, spread feet further apart). Reaching hips toward ceiling and keeping lower belly strong, relax shoulders, neck, and head to let them just hang. Hold for several seconds. Walk hands over to right foot and hold for a few seconds. Walk hands back to center and then to left foot and hold for a few seconds. Walk hands back to center and then under and behind legs, hold for a few seconds. Return hands to center, bend knees and slowly roll up to standing.
- 13) Keeping feet spread, put hands on hips and circle hips to the right, down, left and up. Repeat several times, then switch direction and repeat several times.
- 14) Foot circles – both directions, both feet.