

Lesson 1 - Stretches

- For Safety, Always warm up your muscles before stretching.
- Always stretch after exercise to restore muscle fibre length and avoid tears.

Neck and Side Stretch



- Tip ear to shoulder, not shoulder to ear
- Breathe
- Continue to collapse that side
- Run hand down leg.
- Take other hand up over head and reach for water.

Neck and Side Stretch

In this clip my right hand is on my leg to check how far I'm bending and if it's the same on both sides. The hand on the leg can offer support and helps to keep you aligned. My left hand was ahead of my body instead of over my head showing some stiffness. As I switch sides I drop my left ear to my shoulder first, start bending and then follow through with my right arm coming over my head. It also tipped ahead of my body which is not surprising as I'm looking down.

In the Ocean you can see I'm more aligned and I'm not looking down.

You'll know you're more aligned if your arm is dripping water on your head. Vicky doesn't want to drip cold water on herself but she'd get a better stretch by bringing her outside hand up and over.

Once again as we change sides you can clearly see I separate, head, body and arm to allow me time to feel for stiffness in different parts.

You can do this stretch on land too but the water will help you with alignment.

Work towards doing this with your knees bent and your toes pointed forward. Keep your ears, shoulders, hips and heels in alignment.

Hug and Twist

- Grab left elbow with right hand and pull
- Continue to turn right
- Keep breathing
- Try and look behind you



Hug and Twist

Start by holding your left elbow with your right hand. Gently pull across your body.

Continue to turn to the right and finally turn your head to the right.

I like to build through the three steps rather than doing them all at once so I can assess my body for stiffness or lack of range of motion.

At each stage pay attention to how far you can move that body part, your arm from the shoulder, your upper body from the waist and your head from the neck. Do not force it.

You want to just feel a mild stretch to restore range of motion to muscles that may have been shortened while you exercised and are now warm and receptive. Do a minimum of 30 seconds each side.

Forward Bend

- Bend forward from waist stretching pool noodle out in front of you
- Allow your head to drop down towards the water
- Breathe



Forward Bend

Bend forward starting with the top of your head and letting the stretch travel down your spine one vertebrae at a time. If you have a pool noodle allow your arms to rest on it, stretching out in front of you

Stay in this position for 30 seconds minimum concentrating on even rhythmic breaths in and out while you allow more stretch to happen.

Come back up come one vertebrae at a time as well. Shallower water will allow for a greater stretch.

This is also nice to do with your hands on the arena fence after you ride. Allowing your body to drop down between your arms is a great shoulder stretch.

Lunge

- Bend front leg and put weight on it
- Toes pointing forward
- Keep body upright
- Lower rear knee to stretch hip flexors and quads
- Breathe



Lunge

Place one leg forward and one back. Bend your front leg and put your weight on it. Adjust yourself so that your knee does not go past your toes.

Keep the toes of both feet pointing forward.

Allow the rear leg to slide back. Lower the rear knee towards the ground to stretch your hip flexors and quads. You can increase the Psoas muscle stretch by leaning away from the leg you're stretching but towards the side, not forward. You can also push your rear heel towards the ground to stretch your calf.

The more you can keep your body upright and your pelvis level the better the hip flexor stretch will be. For more stability use deeper water and your pool noodle.

Retreat



- From lunge position transfer weight to rear foot turned out at 45 degree angle
- Pull toes up on front foot
- Lower your butt and lean forward to stretch hamstring and calves
- Are you breathing?

Retreat

From the lunge position slide back and transfer your weight to your rear foot which will be turned out at a 45 degree angle

Pull the toes up towards you on your front foot

Lower your seat towards your rear foot and lean forward to stretch your hamstring and calf.

The Stork

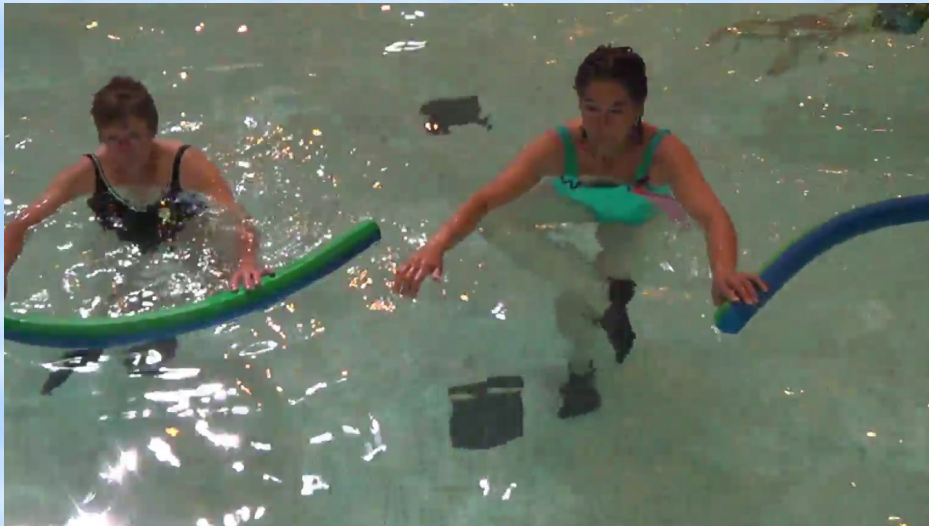
- Stand on one foot
- Bend other leg and grasp foot near butt
- Stand up straight
- Keeping legs close together, keep your pelvis tucked in
- Try to align knees
- Keep breathing



Stork Stretch

We do the Stork stretch to stretch your quads allowing you to get your leg under you better for cueing your horse. You want to make sure you do not allow your back to arch as you will not be stretching as effectively and it is hard on your lower back. You want to engage your core muscles by pulling your belly button up and in and tighten your glutes which is what you sit on, in order to protect your lower back. If you have trouble reaching your foot you can bend your knees, get a hold of the leg and then stand up, or you can use something to hold the foot up. You want to pull the foot up and back. Do not pull it towards your seat if you have knee problems. Your standing leg can be bent for balance, do not lock the knee. The stretch works best when you keep your legs close together. Try and get your thigh straight up and down and your knees side by side, gradually working to get the bent knee further back.

The Chair



- Stand on one leg
- Cross other leg so foot rests above first knee
- Lower yourself to sitting position
- Oh ya, and Breathe

The Chair

Stand on your first leg and lift your second foot. Bend the second leg and place it so the foot rests above first knee. Lower yourself to sitting position. This is another nice stretch for horseback riders

It stretches the outer hamstring area and hip.

Increase the stretch by moving your knee towards the ground. The water helps to support you and you can also use your pool noodle for support.