



Move...your body

Move...to flow

Move...to live

SomaFocus

Hold your head high, stick your chest out. You can make it. It gets dark sometimes, but morning comes. Keep hope alive.

~Jesse Jackson

Do you stick your chest out?

Sticking the chest out is a sign of strength, determination, and courage. It engages the entire torso, including the back muscles, to maintain this posture. The chest, back, and abdomen collectively form the torso. Many organs of the digestive and respiratory systems, the heart, and components of the nervous system are contained within this part of the body. The sternum, ribcage, and a portion of the spine form the bony support system of the torso, and the abdominal muscles provide superficial protection for the viscera beneath. The torso houses the third and fourth chakras, Manipura and Anahata, and several energetic meridians traverse this region of the body, influencing our confidence, relationships, and drive. Alignment issues of the torso affect the alignment of the head, neck, shoulders, hips, and legs, and energetic stagnation in this area may result in digestive issues, feeling stuck, fear, isolation, and self-doubt.

You will need a mat, rug, or comfortable surface for some of the movement exercises. Have a pillow or folded blanket nearby as well. Notice any differences in discomfort, ease, tension, agility, and mobility when doing the movement on the right side and the left side. If you have difficulty with balance, hold on to a wall or other stable structure during the standing exercises.

These exercises require you to engage the core muscles. If you suffer from a serious back condition, consult your healthcare provider before attempting these movement exercises.



Breathing in, I am aware of my heart.
Breathing out, I smile to my heart and know
that my heart still functions normally. I feel
grateful for my heart.

~Thich Nhat Hanh

MINDFUL MOVEMENT

One way to break up any
kind of tension is good
deep breathing.

~Byron Nelson

Movement

1. **Torso Twist:** Stand with feet 3 feet apart, toes pointed forward. Place your hands on top of your hipbones. Twist your entire upper body, including the neck and head, to the right, keeping hip bones pointed forward. Return to neutral. Twist entire upper body, including the neck and head, to the left, keeping hip bones pointed forward. Return to neutral. Do 10 repetitions to each side.
2. **Side-to-side Chest Isolation:** Stand with feet 3 feet apart, toes pointed forward. Place your hands on top of your hip bones. Shift ribcage to the right. Return to center. Shift ribcage to the left. Return to center. Do 10 repetitions to each side.
3. **Front-to-back Chest Isolation:** Stand with feet 3 feet apart, toes pointed forward. Place your hands on top of your hipbones. Shift ribcage forward. Return to center. Shift ribcage backward. Return to center. Do 10 repetitions on both directions.
4. **Ribcage Circles:** Stand with feet 3 feet apart, toes pointed forward. Place your hands on top of your hipbones. Shift ribcage forward and co move ribcage in a circle in a clockwise direction. Do 10 repetitions and repeat moving ribcage in a counterclockwise direction.
5. **Cat/Cow:** Come to your hands and knees on a mat or comfortable surface. Align wrists under shoulders and knees under hips. Flex or curl the spine to gaze at your navel. Arch or extend the spine to gaze upward. Do 10 repetitions. Take your time moving between each shape. Exhale when you look at your navel. Inhale when you look toward the ceiling.

Did you know?

Not all ribs are created equal. We have 7 pairs of “true” ribs that attach to vertebrae in back and directly to the sternum (breastbone) in front. We have 3 pairs of “false” ribs that attach to vertebrae in back and indirectly to the sternum in front via cartilage. And finally, 2 pairs of “floating” ribs that only attach to vertebrae in back.

These exercises are not intended to be painful. If you experience pain, stop and see a health professional for further evaluation.

5. **Spinal Twist:** Lie on your back, arms out to the sides in a T-shape, palms facing up. Bend both knees and place feet on the mat, hip-width apart. Allow your knees to fall to the right, keeping both shoulders on the mat. Place a pillow or rolled-up blanket under your left shoulder for support, especially if your left shoulder lifts off the mat. Hold this position for at least 90 seconds. Focus on your breath. Remove the blanket or pillow from beneath your shoulder and bring knees back to center. Repeat to the left, using the props as needed.
6. **Gentle Back Massage:** Lie on your back, arms by your sides. Bend both knees and place feet on the mat, hip-width distance apart. Bring right knee, then left knee to chest. Wrap arms around legs and rock forward and backward, then side to side to gently massage your back.

CHALLENGE

Challenge

7. **Elbow to Knee Twist:** Lie on your back. Bend both knees and place feet on the mat, hip-width distance apart. Place hands behind your head at the base of your skull. Flex the spine and lift head to gaze at thighs. Twist to the left and lift left knee, bringing right elbow to left knee. Lower left foot to mat, return torso to center, maintaining gaze at navel. Twist to the right and lift right knee, bringing left elbow to right knee. Lower foot to the mat, return torso to center, maintaining gaze at navel. Do 20 – 30 repetitions on each side.

This information is not intended to replace the advice of a healthcare provider. SomaFlows, LLC and Allegra D. Estreet, MS, MSN, RN, LMT, disclaim any liability for the decisions you make based on this information.