

# Dr. B's Morning Stretch Routine

The “falling awake” series of stretches can be performed gently and quietly in bed before rising.

1: Ankle and toe flexion/extension. Start by pointing the ankle and curling the toes into full flexion, holding it for a few seconds before fully dorsiflexing the ankle and toes. Repeat this 2-3 times. This stretch helps reduce pain for patients with plantar fasciitis and loosens the sciatic nerve that travels from the hip to the leg.

2: Abdominal breathing: Place your hands on your abdomen and take a deep quiet breath into your abdomen, when exhaling, allow your abdomen to collapse and press gently into your abdomen with your fingers, exploring for tight muscles and tender points. Just find the points, don't press or massage them, just become aware.

3: Glute stretch and breathing. Slowly bring the right knee toward your chest, stopping when you first feel resistance. Hold the knee in place gently with your hands. Perform abdominal breathing, allowing the hips and shoulders to relax into the bed. Now add the ankle flexion/extension just like step 1. Hold for 1 minute and repeat on the other side.

4. Slowly lie on your side and bring both knees to 90 degrees, stacked on top of each other. Allow your shoulders to rotate so your chest faces up (as far as you can go) while keeping your knees in the same position, rotating your torso. Perform abdominal breathing in this position for one minute. Repeat on the other side.

5. Slowly rotate your whole body into a prone position (on your stomach). Prop yourself slowly onto your elbows and place your lower back into extension. Hold this for one minute while doing abdominal breathing.

6. From the same position, place a pillow under the front of one knee so your hip extends backward. Hold this while doing abdominal breathing for one minute and repeat this on the other side.

7. (Advanced) Remove the pillow. Still face down, bring one knee up to the side 90 degrees so one leg is in a face-down frog leg position. Place your hands palms down under your shoulders. Take the arm from the same side and attempt to bring it under and across the front of your body, reaching under the arm and across the chest wall to twist your body, with your bent leg holding your hips in place. Hold for 1 minute and repeat on the other side.

8. Lay on your side with both knees together facing the edge of the bed. Allow your feet to fall over the side of the bed and use your arms to push yourself up so you are sitting on the side of the bed.

9. With your feet on the floor, bend your right elbow to the right hip, then the left elbow to the left hip, so you are alternating side bending. Do this slowly for one minute.

10. Stand up.