

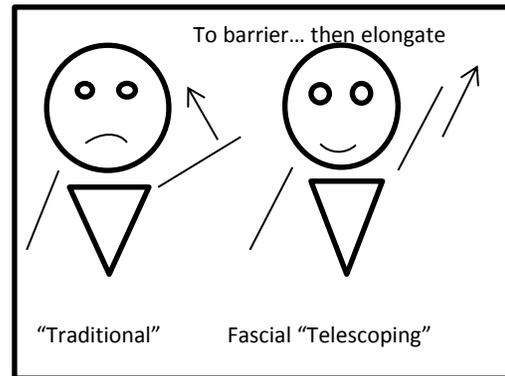
# Myofascial Freedom

The following pictures are designed to be reminders of some of the stretches shared by Quest for Wellness therapists for your home maintenance program for myofascial self-treatment. This will extend or increase your myofascial freedom. Please do these following and between sessions. These are guidelines only. Tune into your body and FEEL where your restrictions are. You and your body are unique. Modify these and make them your own. Another great resource which presents a wide variety of stretching options is the MYOFASCIAL FREEDOM VIDEO.

Some helpful hints and reminders:

Myofascial stretching is different from and more effective than traditional stretching. Rather than the more traditional “forcing the end range” or “pushing through the barrier” approaches, myofascial stretching engages the tissue restrictions by moving gently into them, then gently elongating or telescoping to facilitate and follow tissue as it releases. In 90 to 120 seconds, the fascial tissue begins to release; continue to follow the tissue barrier for a t least 3 to 5 minutes for maximum benefit.

You can never over-stretch the fascia, so you can stay with for even longer if it feels right. Be patient. Soften into the restriction and wait for it to release. It may help to visualize the restriction – softening like “butter melting”, or stretching in three dimensions “like taffy pulling”.



If you find that you’re “bracing” or “tensing up” to get into or stay in any particular position, modify it so that you can then relax and soften. Tissues that are in a “protected” state will not release. Take the notion of “no pain, no gain” and flush it. Stretching, according the principles of MFR, should be gentle...a “good hurt” at the most.

QUALITY is always preferable to QUANTITY. Rather than trying to do all of these stretches at once, you may want to limit yourself to two to three stretches per session, allowing yourself to totally BE in your body and experience the feel of the tissues as they release.

**\*\*\* BE AWARE \*\*\*BE GENTLE\*\*\***

Use this time to check in with yourself. Try to do these in a comfortable and safes pace (free of network news, pets, inquisitive family members, nosy neighbors, etc.) It may help to put on some soothing music to help to shift your focus away from the “inner chatter” and to focus instead on the sensation of the tissues as they release. You may also want to have a pillow available to chew on, scream into, or to beat up. ☺

In order to bring awareness into your body, it may be helpful to scan your body before and after your stretching and self-treatment program. This can be done both lying down and standing up.

Get comfortable, and then ask yourself:

- How am I making contact with the floor?
- Where am I tight/tense/holding?
- How am I breathing? How does my breath travel through my body?

Make a mental note of your answers, a sort of mental Polaroid of before or after. Doing this will help to reinforce the benefit of self-treatment. You may be surprised at how different you feel afterwards. Remember, you are powerful, and you can make a difference for your body and for yourself. Give yourself and these stretches the time they deserve.

Have fun!

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## Neck stretch

### **Step one:**

Place one hand on your opposite shoulder, letting it sink in, like making handprints in soft clay. Drop your shoulders and let the weight of your arm “anchor” the soft tissue here.

### **Step two:**

Elongate through your spine by reaching tailbone for the floor then, starting at the bottom, “float” each vertebra off of the one below it until you reach the top (head). Allow your head to tip away from your hand and “dangle” there. Wait for the release and unwind like a marionette puppet- barrier upon barrier.

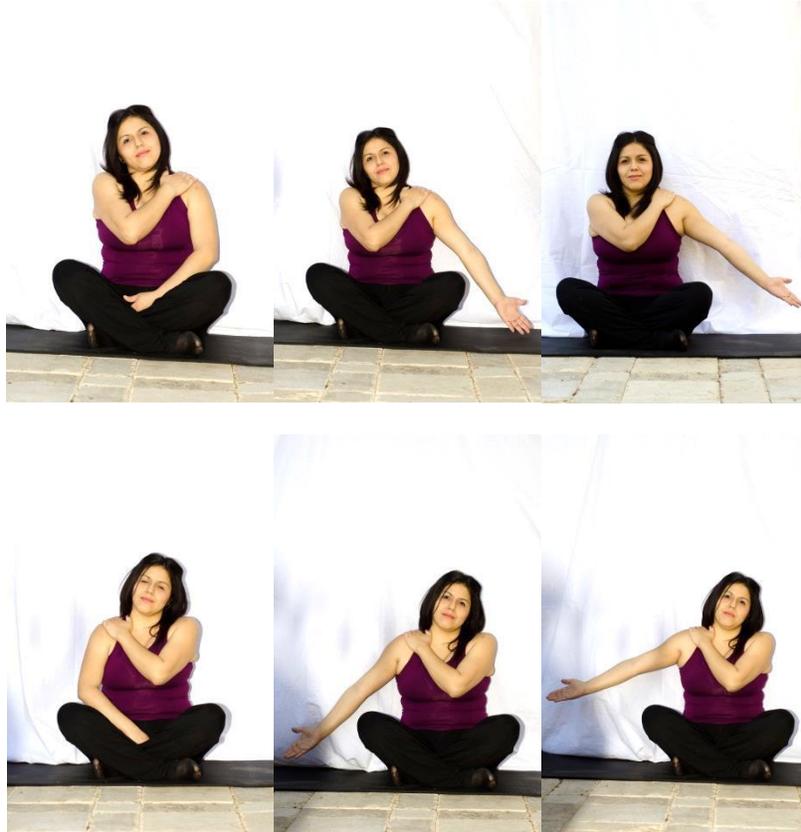
You may feel the stretch through your neck and perhaps into your jaw and face.

Do the same for each side of your neck

### **For additional stretch:**

Telescope your other arm out, rotate palm up, and slowly drop your arm down until you feel it engage into the rest of your system.

Advanced: see if you can engage and unwind your entire spine



**Alternate position:** Standing with feet shoulder widths apart, continue with the stretch as directed.



You may feel the stretch through your neck and perhaps into your jaw and face.

## Piriformis

### Step 1

Lay on floor with knees bent 90 degrees or table top.

### Step 2

Bend with ankle over opposite knee gently stretch bent knee toward wall. 5 minutes on each side



### Alternate

Sit on the floor as shown. Be tall through the pelvis and elongate through the spine, reaching up-through the top of your head. The “sit bone” of your upper leg may not be on the floor. That’s ok. Gently “hug” your knee to your chest, keeping your foot on the floor and feeling the line of pull in your legs or hips. Do both sides. For additional stretch, gently press the elevated “sit bone” down to the floor.



Alternate positions:

If you’re unable to achieve the standard position above, try the following positions.

Sitting in a chair. To increase the stretch while in the chair, lean forward at the hips while keeping your back straight and tall. For easier balance, place your floor foot slightly forward of your knee. Do both sides.

## Legs

### **Step 1**

Lie on the floor with your legs up against a wall, hips a comfortable distance away. Adjust distance away from the wall to achieve a gentle stretch in your legs. Keep your knees straight but soft (not locked). Use a pillow under your head if needed.

The variation of positions are for targeting different areas. You may feel stretching in the pelvis, hips, back and even neck.

### **Step 2**

Point toes toward ceiling, opening front of the legs.

### **Step 3**

Press heels toward ceiling, opening the back of the legs.

### **Step 4**

Legs apart and relax into this position, opening the inner leg (point and flex foot as before) Allow legs to move apart to open through the inner thighs.

### **Option**

If you feel straining with your legs straight, bend your knees and relax into this position.



Point toes toward the ceiling, opening the front of the legs  
Point heels toward ceiling, opening the back of the legs



## Lateral trunk stretch

Feel where there is pulling, tension or holding in your body. Allow your body to elongate gently into these restrictions, stretching through your outstretched leg, pelvis, and ribs, all the way up through your upper stretched arm. Keep your neck soft and relaxed in alignment with the rest of your spine. Adjust your arm position to avoid “jamming” your shoulder.

Breathe deeply into your ribs, also the spaces between each rib. Do both sides for 5 minutes each.

For advanced stretch:

With upper outstretched arm change position of arm increasing the stretch feeling the various muscles of your upper arm and forearm and wrist engage gently moving into the tight areas of motion. With the upper leg straight and stretched behind, increase the stretch further behind you and add extending your toes or slowly flexing toes pushing through your heels.

Lay on side with a rolled pillow under waist. (See photo of proper pillow placement) Bottom leg & bottom arm bent (arm bent with hand supporting head) Upper leg stretched behind you. Upper arm stretched over your head.



### Notes:

This pamphlet is designed to give the reader basic information for the application of basic Myofascial stretching and self-treatment program and should be used solely for informational and educational purposes.

It is beyond the scope of this pamphlet to suggest diagnosis or recommended treatment for any condition, whether physical or mental/emotional. The reader is instructed to consult his or her primary care provider or appropriate health professional to gain proper diagnosis, treatment plan and/or monitoring for any specific symptoms he or she may be experiencing.

The stretches and self-treatment techniques described in this pamphlet should not be interpreted as providing any recommendations for a specific treatment plan, product or course of action. The information provided in this book is provided “as is” and the author makes no representation or warranty as to the propriety or accuracy of any information presented in the pamphlet, or of the efficacy of any of the stretches and techniques presented.

The stretches and self-treatment techniques presented in this pamphlet may not be appropriate for all readers. As with any exercise or self-treatment program, you should not attempt any of the stretches or techniques taught in this book without first discussing them with a physician or other medical professional who is familiar with you and your physical condition and can ensure that your performance of the stretches and self-treatment techniques described in this pamphlet will not be potentially harmful to you. Therefore, it should be understood that the material presented in this pamphlet is in no way intended as a substitute for medical consultation and the author specifically disclaims and liability from, and in connection with, your use of this pamphlet.