Heart AND Hand CHIROPRACTIC

PATIENT HANDOUT

Spinal Fitness 101: Your Daily Moves

Heart & Hand Chiropractic | Dr. Ryan Pilsner, DC · The Clear Signal Live, November 17, 2026

Your spine is your lifeline. These are the simple daily moves from class: stretch first, then move, brace, and plank.

Stretch first, then activate.
Loosen the short, tight tissue first, then wake up the other side.

Step 1: Upper body stretch and activate



Seated neck stretch

1. Sit tall.
2. Hold the edge of your seat with one hand.
3. With your other hand on top of your head, let the arm's weight gently ease your ear toward that shoulder, never a hard pull.
4. Breathe and relax into it.

30 seconds each side, 3 sets.

Doorway pec stretch

1. Both arms at once. Start with arms straight out to the sides.
2. Then raise the elbows about 45 degrees above shoulder height.
3. Ease in until you feel a stretch across the chest, not a pinch in the joint.
4. No doorway? Use a wall or a high-back chair.

Hold 30 seconds, 3 times each side.

Both stretches work at a rest stop or in a hotel doorway. Not while driving.

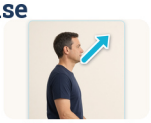


Straight out



Elbows about 45 degrees above shoulder height

FLIP: Dr. Fedorchuk's 3-step neck exercise



Slide forward



Tip up



Slide back

1. Slide forward: slide your whole head up and forward, at about 45 degrees.
2. Tip up: tip your chin up into a soft C.
3. Slide back: slide your whole head back over your shoulders, chin still up.
4. If your chin drops on the way back, start over.

10-second hold, 3 sets of 20, at home once you've been checked and cleared.

Skip FLIP and check with us first if you have dizziness, arm numbness, a recent neck injury, Down syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, known instability, a spinal fusion, or something else complicated in your neck. Stop if you feel numbness, tingling, or weakness.



Wall angels

1. Stand with your back to the wall.
2. Slowly slide your arms up and down, like a snow angel.
3. No weights needed. Keep it comfortable.

About 20 seconds to start.

Step 2: Lower body stretch and wake up



Runner's lunge (hip flexor)

1. Bring one leg back. Keep your spine fairly straight.
2. Bend your upper body slightly away from the back leg.
3. Sore knee? Put the back knee on a padded, armless chair and hold the chair back.
4. Breathe, then switch sides.

30 seconds each side, 3 sets.



Glute wake-up (side-lying)

1. Lie on your side, hips stacked, heels stacked.
2. Rotate the top knee out to about 45 degrees.
3. Lower it with control.

30 seconds each side, 3 sets.

Your core moves and weekly routine are on the back. →

Step 3: Move your spine

Walk. A short walk after a long sit counts. Your discs have almost no blood supply; they were built for a body that gets up and moves.

Cat-cow

1. On your hands and knees, let the spine round.
2. Then ease the other way into a comfortable extension.
3. Smooth and easy, not forced. Stop if anything feels sharp or spreads.

Slowly round and arch your back, 3–4 seconds per cycle, 5–8 cycles. Stay comfortable; don't push the ends.


Cat


Cow

Step 4: Core



Abdominal hollow

1. Sit tall.
2. Draw your belly button in and hold.
3. Breathe and stay tall.

Gently draw your belly button toward your spine without moving your hips or ribs. Keep breathing. Hold 15 seconds, 10 reps.



Abdominal brace

1. Don't pull in or push out. Lock down, as if checking for a six-pack.
2. Use it when you lift or reach: snow, groceries, an awkward reach.
3. Keep breathing.

Mildly tighten your whole midsection, like bracing for a light poke. Don't pull in or push out. Keep breathing. Hold 7–8 seconds, 6 reps, then 4, then 2.



Basic plank

1. Forearms down, elbows under shoulders, feet about hip-width apart.
2. Straight, quiet line from head to heels. No sagging hips, no extra arch.
3. Gently brace, look slightly forward, and breathe.
4. Start on your knees or at a sturdy bench or counter if you need to.

20 to 30 seconds, 2 or 3 days a week. Work toward about 60 seconds when your form stays solid. Form over time: a clean 30 seconds beats a longer sag.


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Side plank (only once the basic line is quiet)

1. Lie on your side, elbow under your shoulder, knees bent.
2. Lift your hips so your knees, hips, and shoulders line up.
3. If that's solid, straighten the legs.

Start on bent knees. Hold 20–30 seconds each side, 2–3 sets, 2–3 days a week. Build toward 45–60 seconds, then progress to straight legs, then a top-leg lift.

If you're pregnant, have uncontrolled blood pressure, had recent surgery, are in acute severe pain, or can't bear weight through your shoulders or wrists, get cleared first.

Your week

Every day: Neck stretch and doorway stretch (they travel well). A runner's lunge if you've been sitting. A walk, plus a little cat-cow. Hollow, then brace.
2 or 3 days a week: Basic plank, 20 to 30 seconds. Side plank only if your line stays quiet.
Wall angels: after the doorway stretch, or after a long sit or drive.
Before a hike: glute wake-ups at the trailhead.
FLIP: only once you've been checked and cleared.
Tip: Write it down or set a reminder. Build a cue into your day.

Safety first

Stop if anything hurts, tingles, or goes numb. If it doesn't settle, get checked instead of pushing through. If you have a spine condition or a recent injury, check with us before you start. This handout is education, not a diagnosis.

Want a closer look at your own spine?

Book a complimentary spinal screening.

Call (970) 377-3557

Book a visit · hnhchiro.com/chiropractic-new-patient-schedule/