



Stay active, strong and healthy, with the VTMFC workout guide.

Social distancing measures put in place in response to the Covid-19 pandemic have resulted in the postponement of team and club sports, especially those that are held in schools, Universities and community center spaces.

The VTMFC is looking to provide a tutorial on at-home exercises, as well as provide tips on how to stay healthy, both mentally and physically.

During these unprecedented times, let us focus on ourselves and work on our hand and footwork fencing techniques by using this at-home workout guide.

- Warm-up Exercises with Weapon
- Shadow Fencing
- Cool Down Flexibility Exercises

Warm-up Exercises with Weapon

WARMING UP: THE MISSING LINK IN FENCING

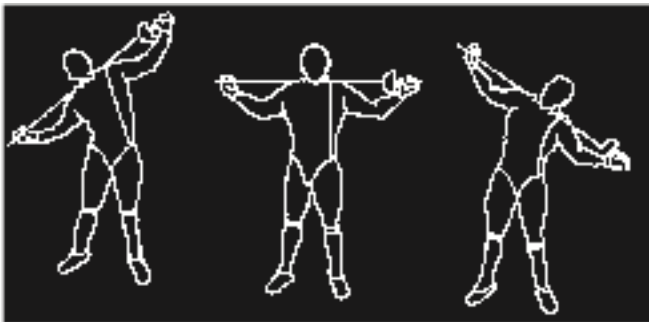
Warming up. We hear about it but we seldom do it. We hardly understand it at all. Warming up is like tuning a fine instrument. It allows your body to respond to your commands more quickly and easily. It increases your body's capacity for sustained exercise and protects you from certain types of injuries.

What happens when you don't warm up?

The result can be torn or pulled muscles, sprained ankles, back sprains, sciatica, torn cartilage and perhaps even a splintered bone.

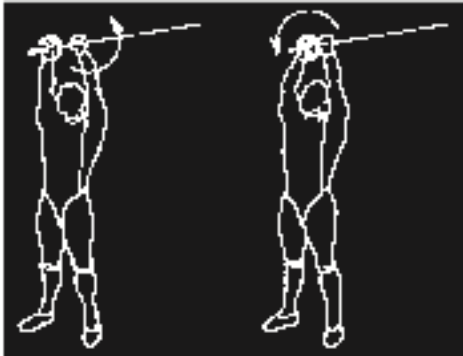
Warming up is well worth a fencer's time and energy. Generally speaking, warming up should be a 10 to 15 minute process. The following are warm up exercises specifically designed to make use of all the muscles directly involved in fencing while using the weapon to maintain arm position during exercise. For all these exercises the starting position has the legs straight and spread shoulder width apart.

LATERAL STRETCH



Stretch arms and hold the weapon over the head in an extended position then lean toward the left and right.

CROSS ARMS STRETCH



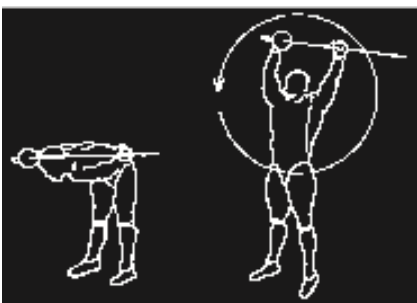
Stretch the arms over the head and twist them in and out to both sides.

FORWARD AND BACKWARD QUARTER CIRCLE



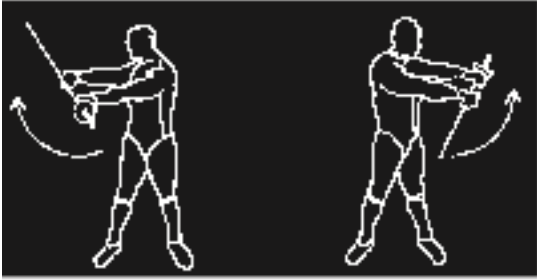
Hold the weapon level in front of the body and then rotate it backward and forward over your head.

BACK ROTATION



Stretch the arms over the head and circle the body with the weapon.

TORSO ROTATION



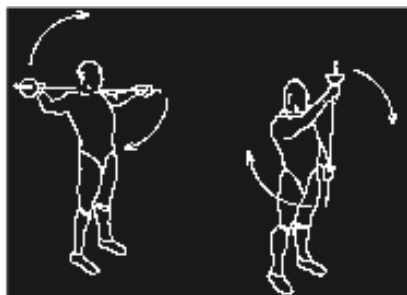
With the arms extended forward and holding the weapon, turn the upper body to the left and right.

CIRCULAR MOTION STRETCH



Hold the weapon in front of the body and make circular motion upward alternating to the left and right.

FRONT ARMS CROSS STRETCH



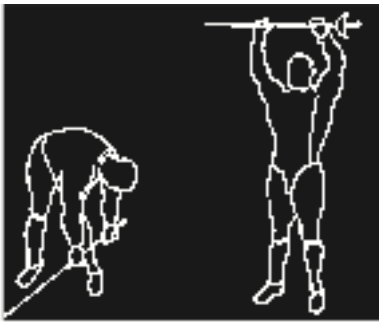
Stretch arms forward, then cross them so that the right arm move upward and the left arm turns down (the weapon moves in a circular fashion up front).

TOE TOUCH STRETCH



Lean forward, bend down and then up, hold the weapon with the arms out-stretched to the front.

BENDING SIDE STRETCH



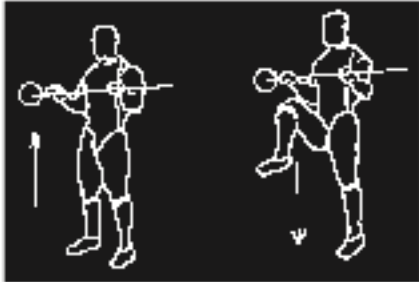
Hold arms and weapon overhead then bend to the left with the arms and weapon still stretched outward.

HORIZONTAL STRETCH



Stand straight, hold the weapon with arms extended above head, then bend forward with arms extended in front and swing your arms while still bent forward.

RAISED KNEE STRETCH



Holding the weapon forward and level, lift each knee alternately to touch the weapon.

ALTERNATING ARM AND LEG SWING



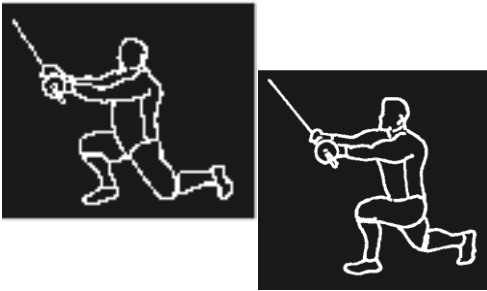
Swing the arms and weapon alternately to the right and to the left while swinging one leg in the other direction.

STRAIGHT LEG SWING



Hold the weapon with arms extended forward at waist level, swing one leg forward and back.

LUNGE STRETCH - 1



Hold the weapon with the arms extended forward at shoulder level, bend the body forward at the waist, stretch one leg backward and bend one leg at a right angle, then change to the other leg.

LUNGE STRETCH - 2



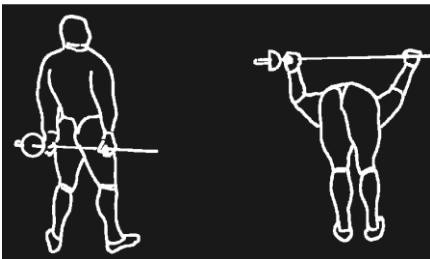
Loop arms backward over the weapon then bend at the knee with one leg while the other is stretched back. Repeat exercise with the other leg.

LATISSIMUS DORSI STRETCH



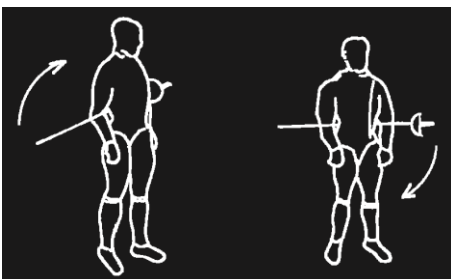
Loop arms backward over the weapon then bend forward at the waist. Turn shoulders to the right and to the left.

RAISED ARMS STRETCH



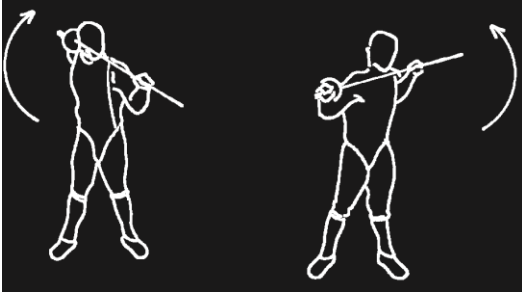
Hold the weapon level and behind the back. Bend forward and raise the weapon up and down.

BODY TWIST - 1



Loop the arms back over the weapon and twist to the left and then turn to the right.

BODY TWIST - 2



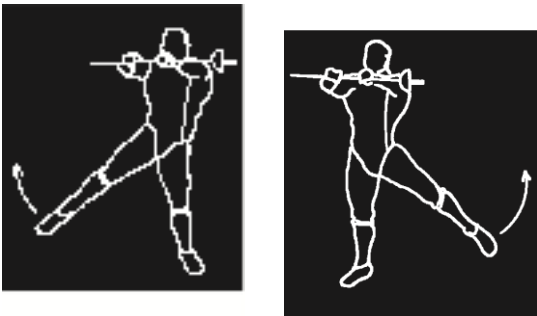
Hold the weapon at chest level then twist the body to the right and left.

LOWER BACK STRETCH



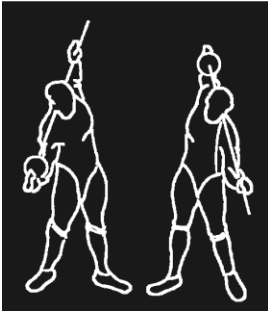
Loop the arm back over the weapon then bend forward and straighten up.

HORIZONTAL LEG SWING



Hold the weapon chest high and swing legs up and down and out-ward to the side

BODY TWIST - 3



Grasp the weapon with both hands and place it on the back of the shoulders. Twist the torso to the right and then the left, by twisting at the waist while keeping the hips and legs in a straight angle.

Shadow Fencing

SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES IN A SHADOW FENCING TRAINING SESSION

An exercise session is best designed on a circuit training basis (i.e.- one progresses from one skill station to another until all the fencing techniques have been practiced).

TIME PER STATION

It's impossible to make definite statements regarding the amount of time one should spend at each station. The fencer must vary the length of the time spent at stations to meet his/her own particular needs, and to adjust to his/her capabilities. A finely conditioned fencer will be able to endure a very strenuous level of exercise of five minutes duration at each station.

REST PERIODS BETWEEN STATIONS

The rest period between stations should be one minute in length. A watch or clock is necessary if a precise routine is to be followed.

DURATION OF EACH TRAINING SESSION

The total time to be spent at each training session is easily computed. For example, one

could shadow fence for 5 minutes at each station, then rest for 1 or 1 and a half minutes between stations. One then adds the combined duration of all stations and the number of rounds (one round equals station A to J). Since time spent at each station is 5 minutes and there are 8 active stations, the initial training session will be 40 minutes in length excluding 7 or 10 and a half minutes rest periods. With one round, the total duration of each practice session will be at least 47 minutes in length.

RHYTHM AND SHADOW FENCING

Rhythmic imagination is an important aspect in shadow fencing practice. In some ways, the rhythm can be considered similar to dance music. Since shadow fencing can be regarded as a form of dance, the music will help one to move more easily and rhythmically. Shadow fencing is effective in improving the skill and work capacity of the individual. The addition of music to the workout will make it more enjoyable and may inspire the creation of new foot work, hand work patterns and fencing tempos.

STATION A: WARM-UP EXERCISES WITH WEAPON

Major Exercises:

Lateral stretch.^[SEP]Bending side stretch.^[SEP]Alternating arm and leg swing. Forward and backward quarter circle.

Torso rotation.^[SEP]Circular motion stretch. Raised knee stretch. Body rotation.

Cross arm stretch. Horizontal swing. Toe touch stretch. Lunge stretch.

Exercise Time: 15 minutes of general warm up exercises with the weapon before the circuit training (adjust time to needs and capabilities in this and other stations).

Rest Period: Get ready for station B exercises.

Note: See Chapter 2: Strength training for fencing, the section on warm-up exercises with weapon for details.

STATION B: LEG MOVEMENT Major Techniques Exercised:

Step forward and backward, slide forward and backward, hop forward and backward.

Starting from the on guard position, begin first with a step forward and backwards, then alternate randomly with the other three foot work techniques. Be certain to keep the upper body in the on guard position.

Rhythm: At the fencer's discretion.^{[L][SEP]} **Duration:** Perform continuously for 5 minutes.^{[L][SEP]} **Rest Period:** 1 minute, preparing for station C exercises.

Note: See the foil section, Chapter 10.

STATION C: FENCING POSITIONS COMBINED WITH WEAPON HAND AND LEG MOVEMENT

Major Techniques Exercised:^{[L][SEP]} **Fencing positions:** Sixte, Octave, Quarte, Septime, Tierce, Seconde, Quinte, Prime. **Movement of the weapon hand:** Lateral movement, Circular movement, Diagonal movement, Semi-circular movement.

Starting from the on guard position, continue the footwork from Station B and integrate this with the fencing positions and weapon hand exercises described here. The rear hand remains in the on guard position and the weapon hand performs the handwork in random fashion. Be certain to move the hand to a given position before moving the feet.

Rhythm: At fencer's discretion.^{[L][SEP]} **Duration:** Continuously for 5 minutes.^{[L][SEP]} **Rest Period:** 1 minute, preparing for station D exercises.

Note: See the foil section, Chapter 8 and 9.

STATION D: ENGAGEMENT COMBINED WITH LEG MOVEMENT Major

Techniques Exercised:

The engagement, taking the engagement, change of the engagement, the double engagement.

Starting from the on guard position continue the footwork from station B and perform the engagement with the weapon hand. The rear hand is in the on guard position. The distinction between station D and the previous station is that here one imagines that one is making contact with the opponent's blade, whereas at station C the movements

are not directed at the opponent's blade.

Rhythm: At fencer's discretion.^[SEP] **Duration:** Continuously for 5 minutes.^[SEP] **Rest Period:** 1 minute, preparing for station E exercises.

Note: See the foil section, Chapter 12.

STATION E: OFFENSIVE ACTION COMBINED WITH LEG MOVEMENT Major

Techniques Exercised:

The simple attack, the compound attack, the attack on the blade, the redoubling attack.

Starting from the on guard position, perform the footwork as in station B and intersperse it with the offensive techniques described above.

Rhythm: At the fencer's discretion.^[SEP] **Duration:** Continuously for 5 minutes.^[SEP] **Rest Period:** One minute, preparing for station F exercises.

Note: See the foil section, Chapter 13 and 14.

STATION F: DEFENSIVE ACTION COMBINED WITH LEG MOVEMENT Major

Techniques Exercised:

The parries, the ripostes, the counter-ripostes.

Starting from the on guard position perform the footwork as described in station B and perform parry-riposte and counter-riposte to an imaginary offensive blade repeatedly.

Rhythm: At the fencer's discretion.^[SEP] **Duration:** Continuously for 5 minutes.^[SEP] **Rest Period:** 1 minute, preparing for station G exercises.

Note: See the foil section, Chapter 17.

STATION G: ENGAGEMENT, OFFENSIVE ACTION AND LEG MOVEMENT Major

Techniques Exercised:

Footwork:

Engagement: Offensive:

Step forward, slide forward, hop forward, pass forward.^[SEP] Step backward, slide backward, hop backward, pass backward.

Take the engagement, change of the engagement, double engagement.

Straight thrust, cut-over (coupé), beat lunge, disengagement, one-two, change beat.

Starting from the on guard position perform the actions from station D and combine with the offensive actions outlined above.

Rhythm: At the fencer's discretion.^[SEP] **Duration:** Continuously for 5 minutes.^[SEP] **Rest Period:** 1 minute, preparing for station H exercises.

Note: See the foil section, Chapter 10, 12 and 13.

STATION H: OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE ACTION AND LEG MOVEMENT Major

Techniques Exercised:

Footwork and Handwork: Offensive, Defensive.

Step forward, step backward, slide forward, hop forward.

Straight thrust, disengagement, cut-over (coupé), one-two, beat lunge, change beat

Parry-riposte, parry riposte-disengage, counter-riposte.

Starting from the on guard position combine the action from station E and F, perform as fast as possible while maintaining precise movements. Imagine an opponent in front of you.

Rhythm: At the fencer's discretion.^[SEP] **Duration:** Continuously for 5 minutes.^[SEP] **Rest Period:** 1 minute, preparing for station I exercises.

Note: See the foil section, Chapter 10, 13 and 17.

STATION I: BALESTRA AND FLECHE PRECEDED BY LEG MOVEMENT Major

Techniques Exercised:

Offensive action: Balestra, flèche.^[SEP] **Footwork:** Step forward and backward, Slide forward and backward.

Pass forward and backward, Hop forward and backward.

Starting from the on guard position perform the footwork from station B and intersperse it with the balestra attack or by flèche.

Rhythm: At the fencer's discretion.^[SEP] **Duration:** Continuously for 5 minutes.^[SEP] **Rest Period:** 1 minute, preparing for station J exercises.

Note: See the foil section, Chapter 15.

STATION J: COOL DOWN

Major Exercises:

Knee and hip joints stretch.^[SEP] Hip, knee joints, spine and abdominal stretch. Shoulder and back stretch.^[SEP] Back, thigh, chest and shoulder stretch.

Chest and back stretch.^[SEP] Back, waist and thigh stretch. Neck stretch.

Duration: Allow for 15 minutes of cool down flexibility exercises after completing the training circuit.

Rest Period: Shower.

Note: See section on flexibility exercises for details.

Cool Down, Flexibility Exercises

Flexibility is best achieved through the overload principle and by gradually forcing the muscles and connective tissues to stretch while moving a joint through its full range of motion. In stretching one should feel the pull of the muscle but not to the point of pain.

To increase muscle flexibility two methods are commonly used: static and ballistic stretching.

Static stretching is the most effective and safest exercise because it stretches the muscle under controlled conditions. In a static stretch the muscle is held at a greater-than-resting length for 8 to 10 seconds and then relaxed for 5 seconds. This cycle of stretching and relaxing should be repeated for 5 to 8 repetitions in each of the exercises described below.

Ballistic stretching puts a muscle in a longer-than-resting position by bouncing against the muscle in an attempt to produce greater muscle length. This method of muscle stretching can be dangerous especially if the muscle is cold. Ballistic stretching causes the muscle to tighten with the distinct possibility of tearing.

The exercises shown on the following pages are stretching exercises selected especially for the use in fencing.

SHOULDER JOINTS



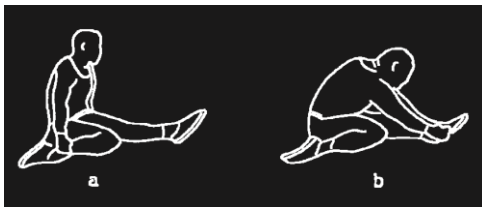
Movement: Inhale deeply then stretch the arms overhead with the fingers locked (Fig. b). Exhale with mouth and throat wide open. Inhale again and return to the starting position while exhaling. Repeat rhythmically with deep breathing 10 to 20 times.

Major Muscles Exercised: The stretching of the shoulder joints and the chest (pectoralis major muscles).

Starting Position: In a sitting position with the neck firm, elbows well back, chin up, chest high, abdomen drawn in, legs flat and spread and the trunk at right angles to the floor (Fig. a).

Note: Every effort should be made to keep the trunk erect and the elbows fully extended, and the arms held way back. The exhaling must be even and sustained throughout the movement. Do not hold your breath.

KNEE AND HIP JOINTS - 1



Movement: Bend the trunk forward and downward on the left leg (Fig. b), pulling the head as close as possible to the knee with the hands. Return to the starting position and repeat 15 to 30 times. Then repeat on the right side an equal number of times.

Major Muscles Exercised: Extreme stretching of the knee and hip joints.

Starting Position: Sit in a hurdle position (Fig. a). The trunk is erect. The left leg extended and flat. The right leg is bent at a right angle from the hip and also from the knee.

Note: Do this exercise very slowly. If you wish you can sit on a blanket or some other type of padding.

KNEE AND HIP JOINTS - 2



Movement: With a slight lifting motion, shift the body's weight onto the left side to sit on the left thigh. Repeat from one thigh to the other rhythmically 10 to 25 times. Try to confine the movement to the waist and legs and to keep the trunk erect.

Major Muscles Exercised: Waist muscles and the knee and hip joints.

Starting Position: Sit on the left thigh with the legs folded under the body, neck firm, chest high, head up and elbows well back.

Note: Do the exercise very slowly, moving the hips through as wide an arc as possible. If you wish you can sit on a blanket or some other type of padding.

HIPS, KNEE JOINTS, SPINE, AND ABDOMINALS



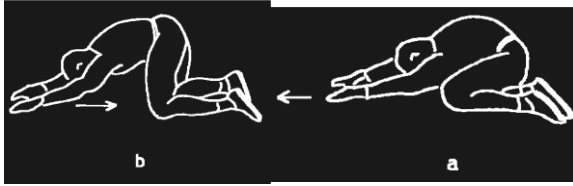
Major Muscles Exercised: Abdominal muscles, hip and knee joints, and extension of the spine.

Starting position: Sit in a hurdle position with the arms hanging free (Fig. a).

Movement: Slowly bend backward using the arms for support until the head touches the floor (Fig. b). Return to sitting position (Fig. a).

Note: Repeat the exercise 5 to 15 times on each side.

SHOULDERS, AND BACK



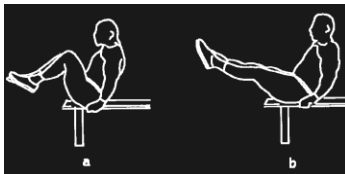
Major Muscles Exercised: Stretching of the shoulder joints and extension and arching of the upper back.

Starting Position: Kneel, sitting on the heels with the trunk and arms extended as in (Fig. a).

Movement: Keep the arms extended throughout the exercise, slowly stretching forward and down. Slide the hands on the floor until the thighs are at right angles to the floor. The upper chest is brought as close to the floor as possible (Fig. b). Return to the starting position and slowly repeat 10 to 20 times.

Note: The exercise must be done very slowly to keep the shoulder joints and back extended as much as possible. Avoid any humping or flexing in the shoulder region.

BACK, HIPS, AND KNEES



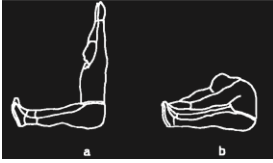
Movement: Kick the legs directly upward at right angles to the floor (Fig. b). Return to the starting position.

Major Muscles Exercised: The lower back muscles and the hip and knee joints.

Starting Position: In a sitting position, lean back on the arms and hands for support (Fig. a) with the hips and knees flexed as much as possible.

Note: Repeat the exercise rhythmically 10 to 40 times.

BACK, THIGHS, CHEST, AND SHOULDERS



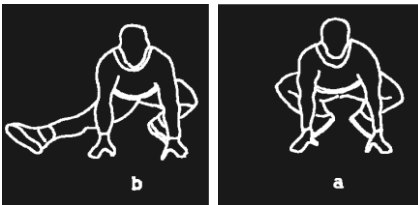
Major Muscles Exercised: The long back muscles, the back thigh, the chest, and the shoulder joints.

Starting Position: Sit with arms stretched overhead, fingers locked with straight back and legs flat (Fig. a).

Movement: Inhale deeply, then exhale while slowly bending down and forward, touching the toes with the finger tips (Fig b). Inhale, then return to the starting position while exhaling.

Note: Repeat the exercise slowly and rhythmically 10 to 20 times.

HIPS



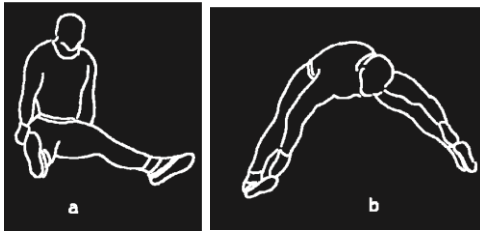
Movement: Extend the right leg to the side with the toe touching the floor as in (Fig. b). Return to starting position (Fig. a). Repeat rhythmically 10 to 20 times. Do the same thing with the left leg.

Major Muscles Exercised: The hip and for the stimulation of the respiratory and circulatory system.

Starting Position: Squat in a resting position with the weight equally divided over the hands and feet (Fig. a).

Note: This exercise can be alternating, extending first the right and then the left sideways 10 to 20 times. This will require a slight hop as the weight of the body changes from one foot to the other.

SPINE, BACK, AND THIGHS



Movement: Bend down and forward, grasp the ankles with the hands and try to pull the forehead as close to the floor as possible (Fig. b). Return to a sitting position with hands on hips (Fig. a).

Major Muscles Exercised: The long back muscles, the back thigh muscles and for flexion of the spine.

Starting Position: Sit with hands on hips, chest high, chin up, abdomen drawn in, legs flat and spread and trunk at right angles to the floor (Fig. a).

Note: Repeat rhythmically 10 to 30 times.

BACK AND THIGHS



Major Muscles Exercised: The long back muscles and the thigh muscles. To help strengthen the long back muscles in the sitting position.

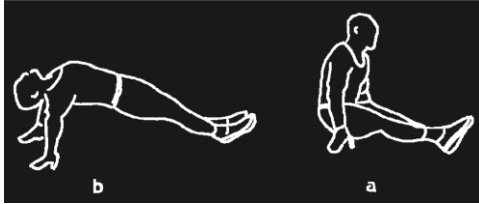
Starting Position: With hands on hips, chest high, chin up, abdomen drawn in, legs flat and spread and trunk at right angles to the floor (Fig. a).

Movement: As shown in (Fig. b), bend

Movement: As shown in (Fig. b), bend the trunk down and forward grasping the right ankle with both hands and pull the trunk as close as possible to the right thigh. Return to the starting position in figure a and repeat 10 to 30 times. Repeat on the left side.

Note: The exercise can be alternating, first the right and then the left side.

CHEST, AND BACK



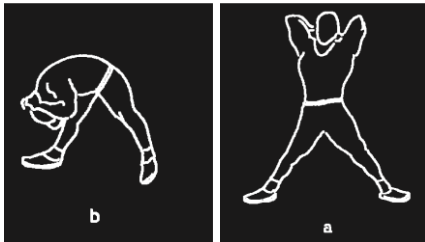
Movement: From the sitting position lift the hips to a back leaning rest, as in (Fig. b). Return to the sitting position and repeat 15 to 30 times.

Major Muscles Exercised: The chest muscles and to help strengthen the upper back.

Starting Position: Sit with hands on the floor and both legs extended (Fig. a).

Note: Keep the chest high and the abdomen level with the chest.

HIPS, SPINE, AND BACK



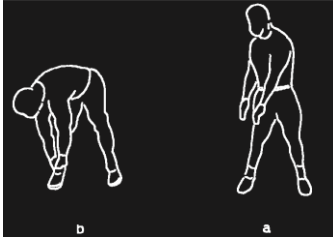
Movement: Bend the trunk forward and downward, bringing the forehead as near the floor as possible as in (Fig. b). Return to starting position and repeat 10 to 25 times.

Major Muscles Exercised: For flexing of the hips and spine and for stretching the long back muscles.

Starting Position: Begin with legs spread, neck firm, chest high, head up, and legs rotated outward as in (Fig. a).

Note: Do the exercise slowly to keep the body in balance.

BACK, WAIST, AND THIGHS



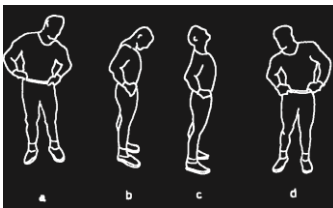
on the right leg, grasping the right ankle with both hands. Pull the trunk and forehead down toward the thigh and knee (Fig. b). Return to the starting position and repeat 10 to 25 times. Repeat sequence on opposite side.

Major Muscles Exercised: The long back muscles, the waist and the back thigh muscles.

Starting Position: Stand with the legs spread apart and arms down at the side (Fig. a).

Movement: Bend down and sideways

NECK



Return to the starting position and repeat rhythmically 20 to 40 times. Repeat, bending the head to the right (Fig. d) and then to the left.

Major Muscles Exercised: The neck muscles.

Starting Position: Stand with arms at the side, pelvis firm and feet parallel about two inches apart (Fig. a).

Movement: Bend the head stretching forward and downward with the chin (Fig. b). Return to the starting position and repeat 20 to 40 times. Bend the head backward (Fig. c).

Note: The exercise can be alternating, first the right and then the left.



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