

Yoga & Pilates for the Hips and Lower Back

Welcome to Yoga and Pilates for the Hips and Lower Back. Yoga and Pilates are mind-body disciplines that approach health in a holistic manner. Both practices utilize breath and concentrated attention to bring awareness to what is happening in the body. The back side of the body takes on a lot of tension by working hard to hold us up every day. Research states 80-85% of the population experience back pain at one time in their lives. In order to move efficiently, the pelvis needs to remain stable while our legs are in motion. Hip and glute muscles are designed to flex, extend, internally rotate and externally rotate the leg. When these muscles do not function properly, other parts of the body compensate to produce movement, thus developing pain. In terms of lower back and hip health, today's workshop utilizes yoga and Pilates as a form of corrective exercise aimed to improve low back and hip discomfort by releasing hard-to-reach tension, developing efficient movement patterns, and reestablishing strength and proper alignment.

Three Common Causes of Hip & Low-back Pain

- Poor posture: Weak core and misaligned pelvis strain lumbar spine
- Muscle overuse: Tight hips limit range of motion & strain low back when legs move
- High levels of stress: Increased levels of cortisol, causing chronic inflammation

Benefits of Yoga and Pilates for the Hips and Low Back

- Lowers risk of low-back pain
- Releases tension and decreases inflammation
- Develops proper postural alignment and reestablishes efficient movement

Tool Box



Fascia Release with accuball* ball:

- Stand at wall or lie on back, apply pressure to glutes, sacral joint & low back (avoid spine)
- Move back and forth for 30-90 seconds
- If tender spot (knot), stop, hold and breath



Full Locust Variation:

Inhale, lift upper body with both legs wide, exhale, lower half way down and draw legs together (4-6 repetitions)

Wind Reliever Variation:

With both feet lifted, inhale, straighten arms, exhale, draw knees to chest (4-6 repetitions)



Low Lunge Variation:

- Inhale, low lunge with hips in front of back knee, exhale shift hips over back knee (4-6 repetitions)
- Add deeper psoas stretch by raising arms over head on inhale



Warrior II Variation:

Exhale, shift hips back while folding forward, inhale, return to center with long spine and braced core (4-6 repetitions)



Supine Twist Variation:

- Inhale, lift top leg to hip level, exhale lower top leg to floor (4-6 repetitions)
- Hold and soften into pose (4-6 breaths)

If you can take one thing away from today, remember that repetition creates change. Most likely, you have developed hip and low-back discomfort over a long period of time. With consistent practice of the tool box provided (2-3 times per week), you can release chronic low-back and hip tension, develop good posture and increase your overall wellbeing. Start where you are. Be patient. Focus on being comfortable. And enjoy!

Resources:

1) *Viniyoga Therapy for the Low Back, Sacrum & Hips*, DVD by Gary Kraftsow 2) *Accuball: Foot Rubz massage ball (Lacrosse and tennis balls also work well)