

Head/Spinal Extension

Part 1

Position:

On stomach, head turned to the side, palms flat on the floor shoulder width apart.

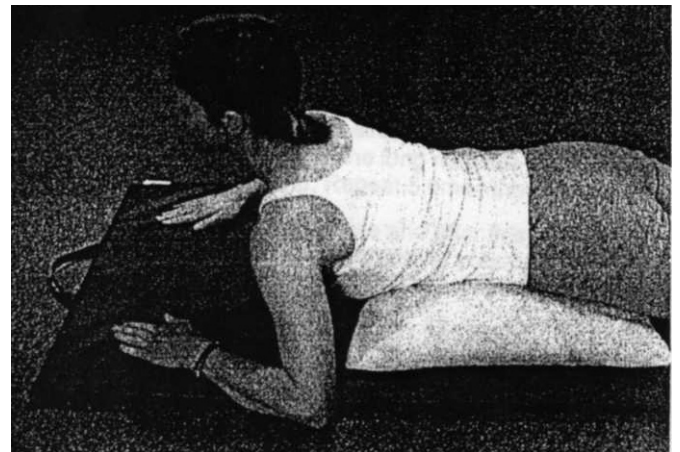
If it is more comfortable for you and helps you to achieve a flatter low back, place a pillow underneath the belly below the chest.



Movement:

Within a range of movement that is comfortable, gently lift the head towards the ceiling feeling muscle contraction from the base of the head through the neck, shoulder blades and into the arch of the low back. Then as you lower the head, feel the softening and releasing of these muscles through the low back, shoulder blades and into the neck and base of the head.

Be conscious to how these muscles relax as they are the ones that hold your head up constantly. Remember to let your head relax to the right and then repeat, relaxing your head to the left side. Repeat this movement several times, alternating this movement from right to left several times.



Part 2

As you get more comfortable allow the hands and elbows to provide some support while you hold your head upright in the neutral position. From this position allow your right shoulder to gently move downwards towards the mat. Notice what your spine and head do. Then bring your right shoulder back up to neutral and try moving your left shoulder downwards towards the mat, again noticing what the head and spine do.

Repeat this movement several times, alternating from side to side. Notice how the neck movement gets easier.

Now combine Parts 1 and 2. When coming down to the mat to relax allow the downward movement of the shoulders to help you rotate your head and neck downwards to relax from the right and then to the left sides. Repeat 2 - 3 more times noticing how the movement of the head, neck and spine becomes more fluid. This movement should help facilitate easier rotation to each side.

Part 3

When you are finished the movement, lie on your back with your legs bent and hands interlaced behind your head.

Breathe out as you lift your head, bringing your head and elbows toward the knees and gently stretching from the head through the neck to the low back.

Repeat this movement 8 - 10 times.

