

ReNuMi Wellness Center

Qi Gong Preparatory Stretches

1. **Back Arch (active Savasana)**

Lay on your back with your arms above your head and your legs extended straight. Breathe in and then, as you exhale, arch your back gently, while pointing your toes, stretching your arms, hands, and fingers as far away from your body as possible. Repeat four times.

2. **Supine Shoulder Raise**

Lie on your back and lace your hands behind your head. Breathe in and then, as you exhale, lift your shoulders off the floor toward the center of your body. Release your shoulders down. Inhale, and as you exhale the second time, lift your shoulders off the floor toward the left side of your body. Release your shoulders down. Breathe in, and as you exhale the third time, lift your shoulders off the floor toward the right side of your body. Release your shoulders down. Breathe in, and as you exhale the fourth time, lift your shoulders off the floor toward the center of your body. Release your shoulders down.

3. **Supine Twist**

Lie on your back and lace your hands behind your head. Place your left foot onto the floor with your knee pointing toward the ceiling. Cross your right knee over your left. Breathe in and then, as you exhale, drop both knees to the right and look left. Breathe in and return to the starting position. Repeat the stretch, again twisting to the right side. Switch legs, so your left knee is crossed over the right. Breathe in and then, as you exhale, drop both knees to the left and look right. Breathe in and return to the starting position. Again, repeat the stretch by twisting to the left.

4. **Sciatica Stretch (Pavana Muktasana)**

Lie on your back and pull your left knee into your chest, leaving your right leg flat on the floor. Breathe in and then, as you exhale, gently pull your left knee toward your right shoulder. Breathe in and return your knee to the left side of your body keeping the knee bent. Exhale and repeat the stretch. Drop your left leg back to the floor, and pull your right knee into your chest. Breathe in and then, as you exhale, gently pull your right knee toward your left shoulder. Breathe in and return your right knee to the right side of your body. Exhale and repeat the stretch.

5. **Supine Leg Raise**

Lie on your back and gently lift your legs so the bottoms of your feet face the ceiling. As you breathe in release your tummy out, and as you breathe out, pull your tummy in. Repeat for four breathes, keeping your legs up.

6. **Seated Half Pigeon (modified Eka Pada Rajakapotasana)**

Sit on the floor with your legs in front of you and your hands behind you. Place your fingers so they are pointing away from your body. Place your left foot flat on the floor so your knee points toward the ceiling. Place your right ankle onto the left thigh. You may need to lean back to do this, but keep your spine straight. As you inhale, lift your chin and the ball of your left foot off

the floor. Then lean forward while holding your breath for a count of 10. Exhale while releasing your chin and foot. Repeat the stretch on the same side. Switch your legs, so the right foot is flat on the floor and the left ankle is resting on the right thigh. Repeat the stretch on the right side two times.

7. Seated Forward Bend (Paschimottanasana)

From a seated position, stretch both legs out in front of you. Keep a slight bend in your knees to reduce strain on your lower back. Take your arms straight up over your head with your hands together and your biceps touching your ears. Breathe in and straighten your back. As you breathe out, lean your chest forward over your legs. Do not try to get your nose to your knees. Inhale and return to the starting position. Repeat the stretch three more times.

8. Legs Open Forward Bend (Upavistha Konasana)

- a. From a seated position, spread your straight legs to form at least a 45 degree angle. You may keep a slight bend in your knees if this is extremely difficult. Breathe in and sit with your spine straight. As you breathe out, lean your chest forward and stretch your hands out in front of you. Take an inhale in this position, keeping your spine straight from your waist to your neck. As you exhale, walk your hands forward slightly. Increase the intensity of the stretch with two more breathes (inhale/exhale - walk hands forward) before releasing up to the starting position.
- b. From the starting position, inhale and straighten your spine. As you exhale, lift your right arm up and over your head toward your left toes and lean your torso over your left leg. Release to the starting position, repeat the stretch a second time to the left side. Release to the starting position and repeat the stretch twice to the right side.
- c. From the starting position, repeat the forward bend. Remember to walk your hands slightly forward through all four inhale/exhale cycles.

9. Pretzel (Gomukasana) & Seated Twist (Ardha Matsyendrasana)

- a. From a seated position, bend both knees and slide your left foot to the outside of your right hip. Cross your right knee over your left knee and place the right foot to the outside of the left hip. Holding your feet with your hands, breathe in and straighten your spine. As you exhale, lean your chest forward over your knees. Come back up as you inhale. Exhale and lean your chest forward over your knees again.
- b. Straighten your right leg in front of you and slide your left foot to the outside of right leg near your upper thigh. Place your right elbow on the left side of your right knee. As you inhale, relax your shoulders and straighten your spine. As you exhale, twist your torso to the left using your right elbow against your right knee as leverage. Do not over twist. Remain in the pose and inhale, keeping your sacrum (lower spine) in-line with your neck, and twist a little further to the left. Release and place your left elbow on the left side of your right knee. Inhale and straighten your spine. As you exhale, twist your torso to the right using your elbow against your knee as leverage. Remain in the pose as you inhale, but check that your sacrum and neck are in line. As you exhale, deepen the twist.

- c. Repeat the Pretzel with the right leg on the bottom and the left knee crossed over the right. Then repeat the Seated Twist with the left leg straight and the right foot placed on the outside of the left thigh.

10. Bow Pose (Dhanurasana)

Lie on your belly with your legs straight behind you. Reach your arms behind you and bend your knees. Hold each ankle or foot with the appropriate hand. Your knees and feet should be about hip width apart. Keep your shoulders relaxed. Rock over your DanTien energy point (3 fingers below the belly button) by pushing your belly in and out. Repeat 10 times. Then release your feet gently.

11. Superman (modified Shalabhasana)

Lie on your belly with your legs straight behind you and your arms straight in front of you. Breathe in and bring your arms and legs (including your knees) off the floor. Hold your breath for a count of three. Then exhale and release your arms and legs gently. Repeat four times.

12. Seated Prayer Bow (active Vajrasana)

Kneel on the floor with the tops of your feet flat on the floor underneath your butt. Bring your hands into a prayer position in the middle of your chest. Inhale and straighten your spine. As you exhale, lean forward and stretch your prayer hands in front of you until you feel a stretch in your armpits. You can deepen this stretch by trying to push your butt toward your heels. Return to the starting position and repeat three times.

13. Wrist/ Forearm Stretch

Stand on your hands and knees with your hands directly under your shoulders and your knees directly under your hips. Turn your hands so your fingertips face toward your knees, but keep your palms flat on the ground. Your right hand should turn in a clockwise direction and your left hand should turn in a counter-clockwise direction. Breathe in and relax your shoulders. As you exhale, increase the bend in your knees so your butt gets slightly closer to the ground until you feel a slight stretch in your wrists and forearms. Release and repeat three times.

14. Neck Release (Vajrasana)

Kneel on the floor with the tops of your feet flat on the floor underneath your butt. Place your arms by your sides and relax your shoulders. Breathe in and straighten your spine. As you exhale, slowly release your neck forward. Allow the weight of your head to pull it forward. Do not strain to reach your chin to your chest. Inhale and return to the starting position. Exhale and slowly release your neck backward, allowing the weight of your head to stretch the front of your neck. Inhale and return to the starting position. Exhale and release your neck forward and rotate your head through a full 360 degrees. Inhale and return to the starting position. Exhale and release your neck forward and rotate your head in the opposite direction through a full 360 degrees.

15. Runners Stretch

Stand on all fours. Place your left foot about one half foot behind your left hand. You will need to keep your knees bent to do this. Place your right foot

with the toe tips on the floor and parallel to the heel of your left foot. Your right foot should be tucked underneath your butt. Breathe in and lift your butt up, so both feet and both hands are flat. Lift your chin slightly so your head is up. Hold your position and breath for three counts. Release down and repeat once more. Switch your feet, so the right foot is more forward than the left and repeat the stretch twice on this side.

16. Knee Rotation

Stand up and place your hands on your knees. Bend your knees slightly. Rotate your knees 360 degrees in one direction 6 times and then repeat in the opposite direction.

17. Hip Rotation

Stand up straight and place your hands on your hips. Rotate your hips 360 degrees in one direction 6 times, and then repeat in the opposite direction.

18. Toe/Ankles/Kicks

From a standing position, move the toes on your left foot so that the tops and bottoms alternately touch the floor. Your toes should move back and forth ten times. Rotate your left ankle in a clockwise direction six times and in the opposite direction six times. Lift your foot off the floor and kick your leg to the side ten times while maintaining your balance. Do not put your foot back on the floor until you have finished all ten kicks. Repeat these three exercises on the right foot.

19. Heel Raises

Stand up straight and place your hands on your hips. Place your feet and knees together for stability. Lift your heels off the floor for ten sets of ten.

20. Standing Flank Stretch

Stand up straight and place your feet and knees together for stability. Stretch your arms above your head with your palms together. Your biceps should touch your ears at all times. Inhale, and as you exhale, lean to the left side, gently stretching your right flank. Return to the starting position, inhale, and as you exhale lean to the right side gently. Repeat the stretch one more time on each side.