

21-Day
Beginner Flexibility Program
danceinsight

Safe Stretching

1

Always warm up!

While the exercises in this program are mostly dynamic stretches, not static stretches, it's still vital to warm up before starting. Do some jumping jacks, run in place, anything to get your heart rate up and break a little sweat.

2

Don't overstretch

You might think that holding a stretch for longer will increase your flexibility faster, but the opposite can actually be true. Overstretching can also lead to serious injury. Don't hold any stretch for more than 30 seconds and don't push yourself to the point where you're in extreme pain.

3

Listen to your body

Pain is a signal from your body that something is wrong. Some discomfort is normal when stretching, but it should be completely tolerable. If a stretch hurts too much, ease up or skip that stretch altogether. Consult your dance teacher or a fitness professional if you need help with modifications.

4

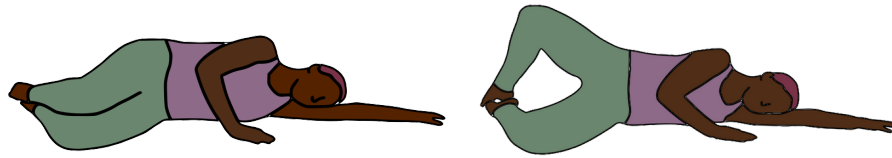
When in doubt, ask a professional

If you encounter any trouble with these exercises or have questions, don't just Google it. Ask your dance teacher or a fitness professional. You can also email questions to nicole@danceinsight.net.

Day 1

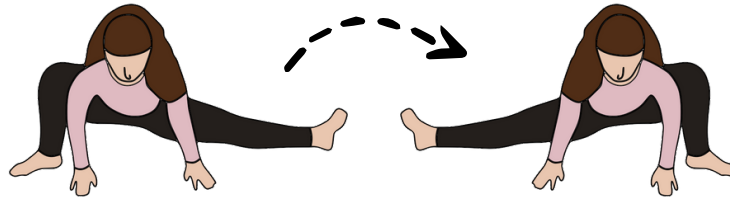
Pilates Butterfly - 8 Each Side

Keep your shoulders and hips stacked on top of each other. Rotate your leg using your glutes. Optional: Add resistance band loop around thighs.



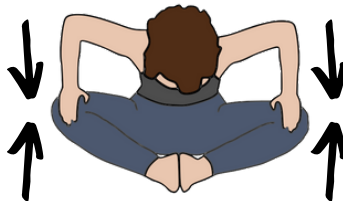
Side to Side Lunges - 8 Reps

Make sure your bent leg stays in line with your toes and doesn't pull forward. Walk your hands along the ground to get to the opposite lunge, or transition without your hands for an extra challenge.



Butterfly Active Stretch - 30 Seconds

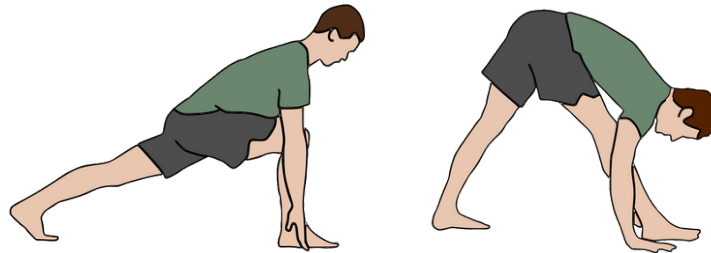
Use your hands to press down while pushing up against your hands with your legs. You're trying to engage the muscles that you feel a stretch in.



Day 2

Lunge-to-Triangle - 8 Each Side

You can pull your back foot in and/or bend your knees if you need to in order to get to the triangle position. This exercise is about balance and engaging the hamstrings while you stretch them.



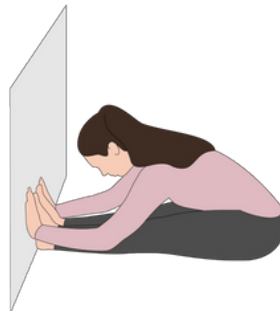
Lunge Squats - 8 Each Side

"Squat" by bending your back leg and bringing your knee as close to the floor as you can get it without touching, then stretch the back knee.



Pike Stretch Against a Wall - 30 Seconds

As you stretch forward, actively press your heels into the ground, while keeping your legs straight. You're trying to engage the muscles that you feel a stretch in.



Day 3

Second Position Squats - 8 Reps

Perform these squats in a second position that is slightly turned-in from your normal second.



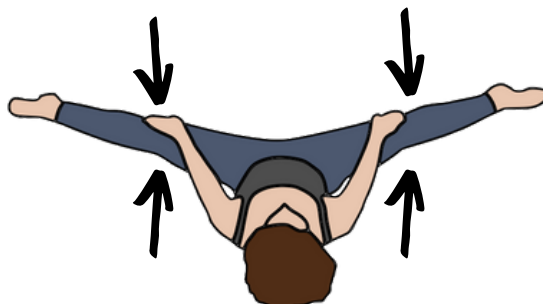
Straddle Opens - 8 Reps

This exercise can put excessive strain on the back/core if you aren't flexible enough to get your feet comfortably over your hips. If you feel it more in your core than your legs, do this exercise against a wall.



Straddle Active Stretch - 30 Seconds

Press down with your hands while pushing up with your legs. You're trying to engage the muscles that you feel a stretch in. Do this against a wall if it's more comfortable.



Day 4

Fire Hydrants - 8 Each Side

Optional: Add resistance band loop around thighs.

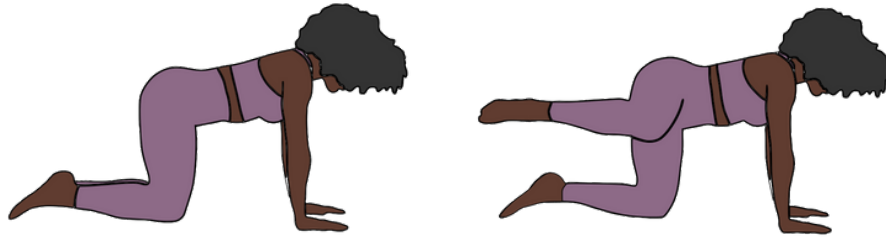


Figure 4 Pulses - 8 Each Side

Using your glute muscles, open your knee so that it's as turned-out as it can go, then release and let it turn in. Repeat.



Pidgeon Stretch - 30 Seconds Each Side

To make this stretch more challenging, try to make your front shin parallel with your shoulders (dotted line). To make this stretch easier, tuck your front foot closer to your opposite hip (shown).



Day 5

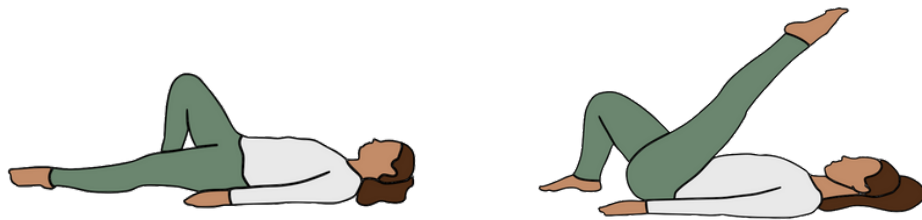
No Hands Lunge - 30 Seconds Each Side

Think of tucking your pelvis forward and go as deep in the lunge as you can. You should feel a stretch in the front of your hip.



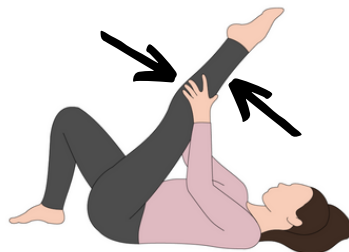
Laying Battements - 8 Each Side

Make sure your knee stays straight and your spine remains neutral.



Leg Hold Active Stretch - 30 Seconds Each Side

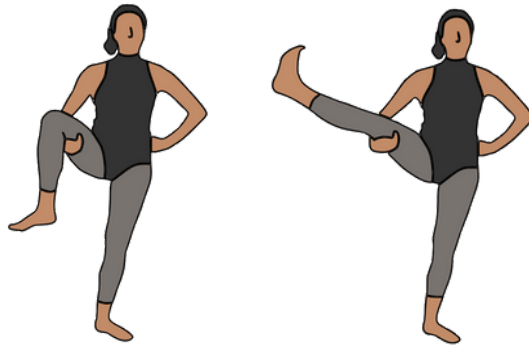
As you pull your leg towards you, engage your hamstrings and push against your hands, creating resistance.



Day 6

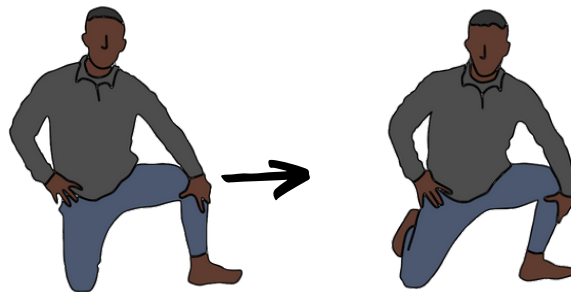
Leg Extensions - 8 Each Side

Hold onto a wall or barre for balance if needed. If you can't reach your leg without bending over, loop a resistance band around your thigh and hold the band, or this exercise can be done seated.



Side Kneeling Lunges - 8 Each Side

Perform this exercise on a carpet or yoga mat to protect your bottom knee. Make sure your top knee stays in line with your toes.



Straddle Side Stretch - 30 Seconds Each Side

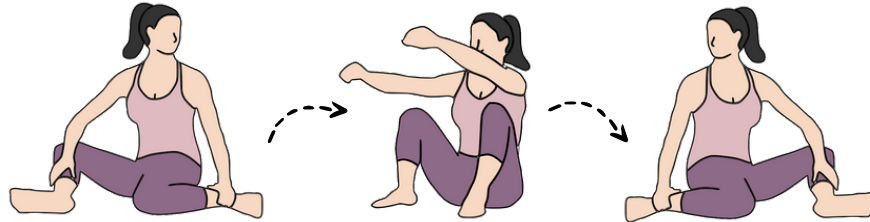
Make sure to keep both sit bones on the floor.



Day 7

Rotating Z-Sit - 8 Reps

Going back and forth counts as one rep.



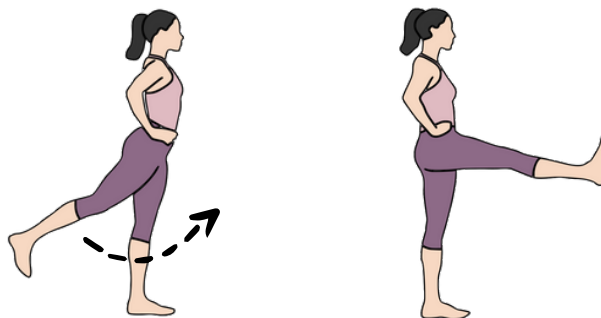
IT Band Stretch - 30 Seconds Each Side

Keep both shoulders on the floor.



Leg Swings - 8 Each Side

These can be done with a bent leg or a straight leg. Don't kick to your full height; this is about releasing your hips, not stretching.



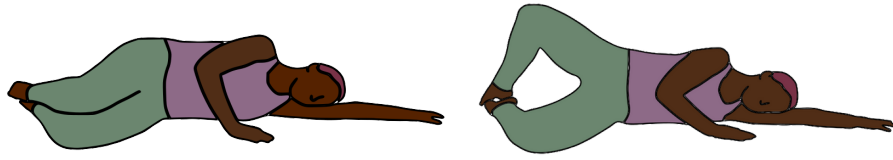
Downward Dog - 30 Seconds

Look at your toes behind you and keep your ears in line with your arms.

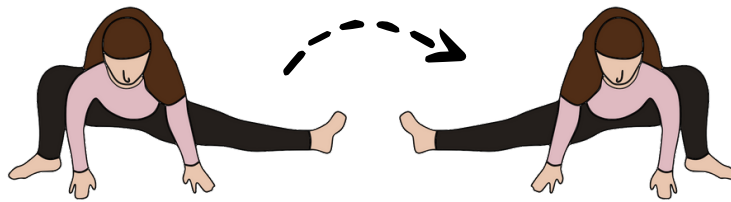


Day 8

Pilates Butterfly - 10 Each Side



Side to Side Lunges - 10 Reps



Butterfly Active Stretch - 30 Seconds



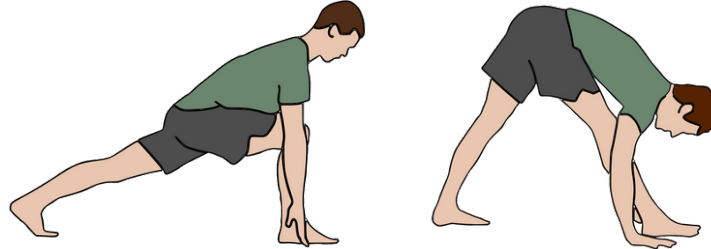
Criss Cross Stretch - 30 Seconds

As much as possible, try to have your shins parallel with your shoulders. Make sure not to sickle the top foot.



Day 9

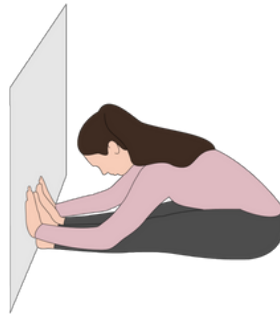
Lunge-to-Triangle - 10 Each Side



Lunge Squats - 10 Each Side



Pike Stretch Against a Wall - 30 Seconds



Kneeling Lunge Stretch - 30 Seconds

Think of tucking your pelvis forward to feel a stretch in the front of the hip.



Day 10

Second Position Squats - 10 Reps

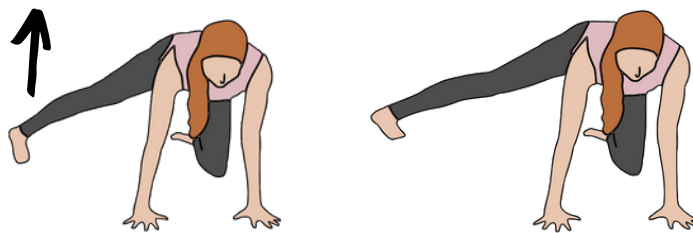


Straddle Opens - 10 Reps

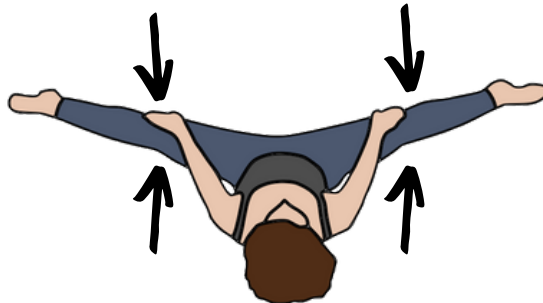


Tabletop Side Leg Lifts - 10 Each Side

It's okay to open your hips a little as you lift the leg in this exercise. The important thing is that you're lifting the leg with your glutes.



Straddle Active Stretch - 30 Seconds



Day 11

Fire Hydrants - 10 Each Side

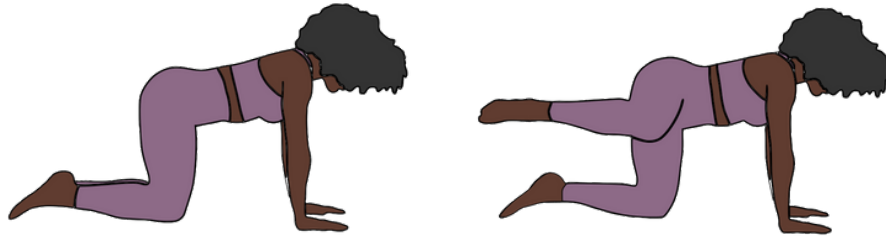


Figure 4 Pulses - 10 Each Side



Pidgeon Stretch - 30 Seconds Each Side



Happy Baby Stretch - 30 Seconds

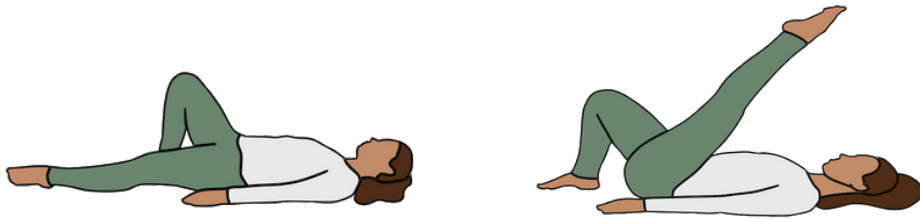


Day 12

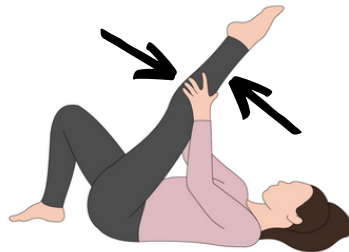
No Hands Lunge - 30 Seconds Each Side



Laying Battements - 10 Each Side



Leg Hold Active Stretch - 30 Seconds Each Side



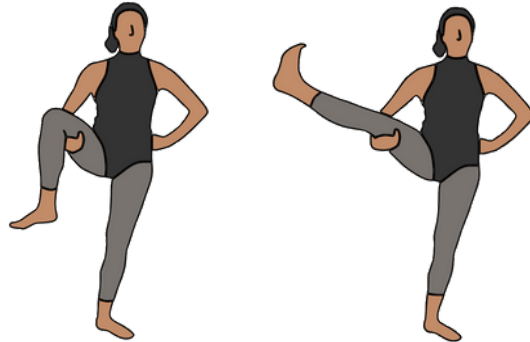
Front Splits - 30 Seconds Each Side

If splits are too intense, place your back knee on the ground and stretch over your front leg.

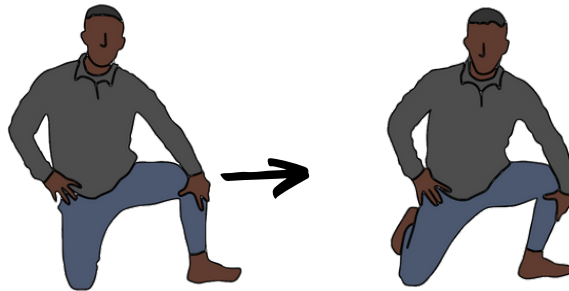


Day 13

Leg Extensions - 10 Each Side



Side Kneeling Lunges - 10 Each Side



Straddle Side Stretch - 30 Seconds Each Side



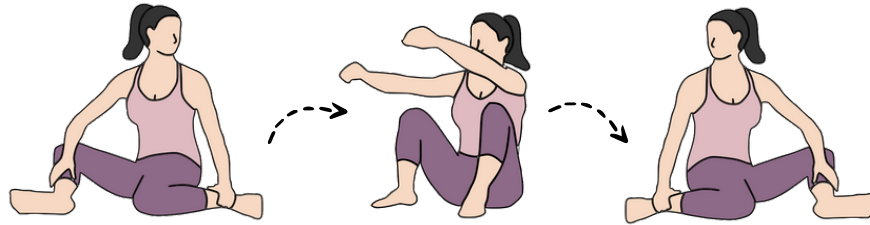
Middle Split - 30 Seconds

If splits are too intense, you can remain seated in the straddle position and stretch forward.



Day 14

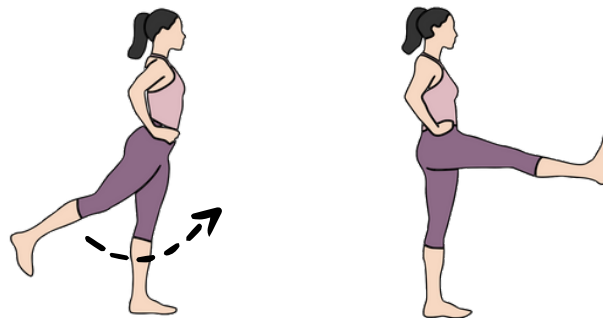
Rotating Z-Sit - 8 Reps



IT Band Stretch - 30 Seconds Each Side



Leg Swings - 8 Each Side

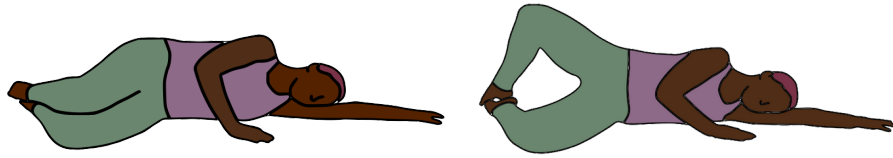


Downward Dog - 30 Seconds

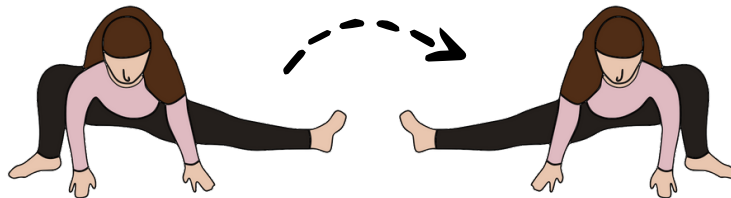


Day 15

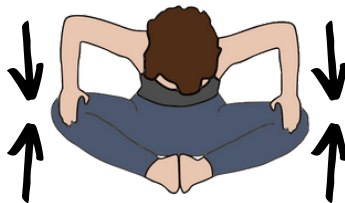
Pilates Butterfly - 12 Each Side



Side to Side Lunges - 12 Reps



Butterfly Active Stretch - 30 Seconds

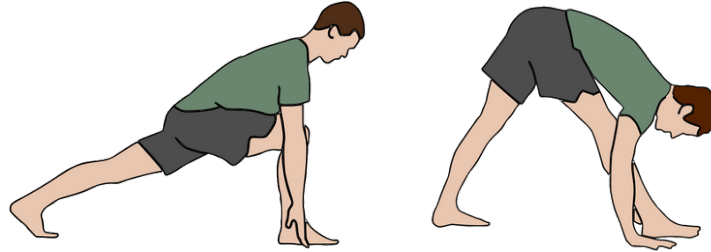


Criss Cross Stretch - 30 Seconds



Day 16

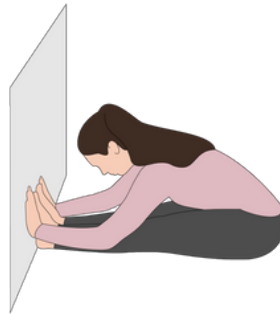
Lunge-to-Triangle - 12 Each Side



Lunge Squats - 12 Each Side



Pike Stretch Against a Wall - 30 Seconds



Kneeling Lunge Stretch - 30 Seconds

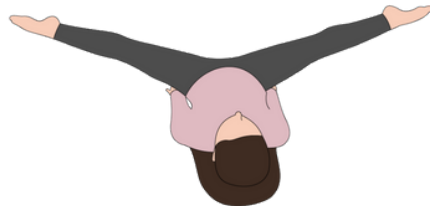
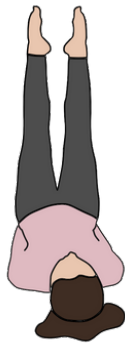


Day 17

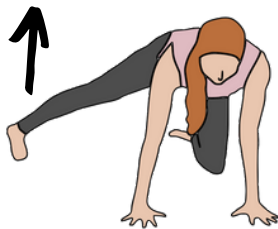
Second Position Squats - 12 Reps



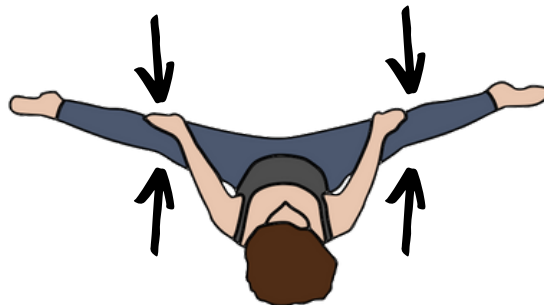
Straddle Opens - 12 Reps



Tabletop Side Leg Lifts - 12 Each Side



Straddle Active Stretch - 30 Seconds



Day 18

Fire Hydrants - 12 Each Side

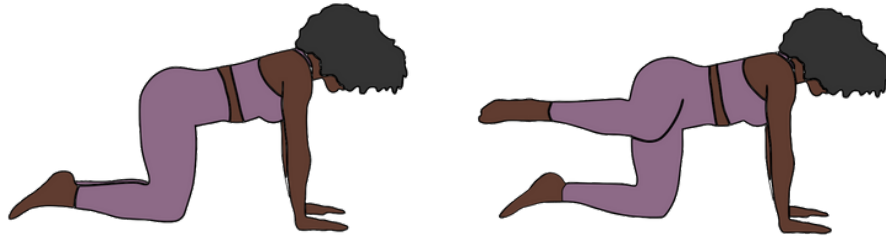


Figure 4 Pulses - 12 Each Side



Pidgeon Stretch - 30 Seconds Each Side



Happy Baby Stretch - 30 Seconds

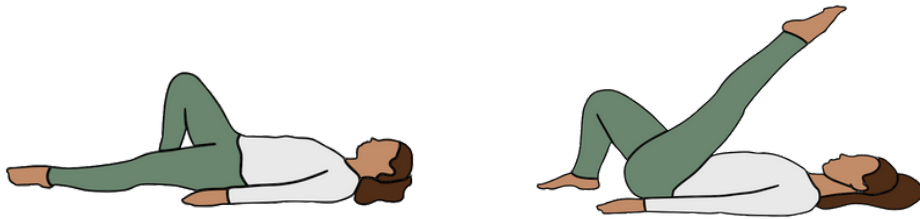


Day 19

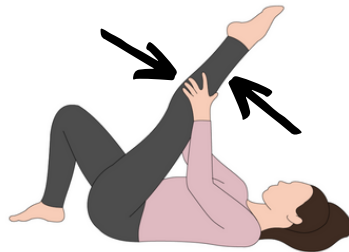
No Hands Lunge - 30 Seconds Each Side



Laying Battements - 10 Each Side



Leg Hold Active Stretch - 30 Seconds Each Side



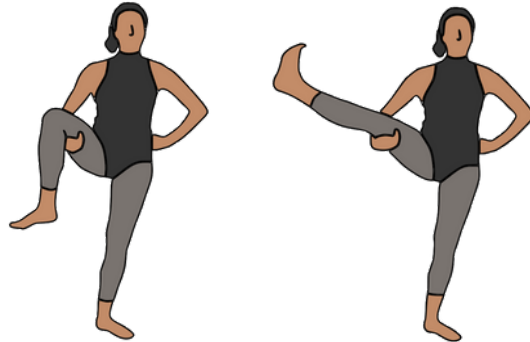
Front Splits - 30 Seconds Each Side

If splits are too intense, place your back knee on the ground and stretch over your front leg.

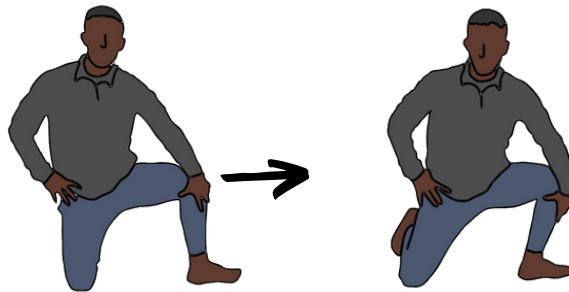


Day 20

Leg Extensions - 12 Each Side



Side Kneeling Lunges - 12 Each Side



Straddle Side Stretch - 30 Seconds Each Side



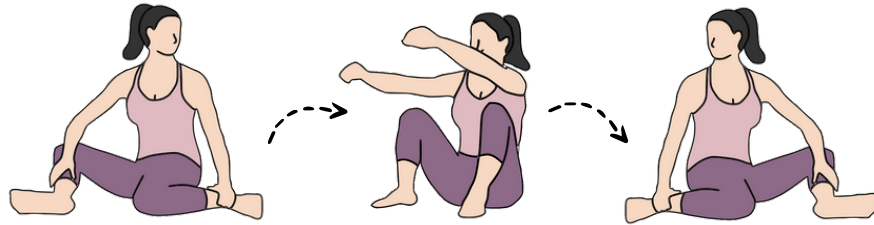
Middle Split - 30 Seconds

If splits are too intense, you can remain seated in the straddle position and stretch forward.



Day 21

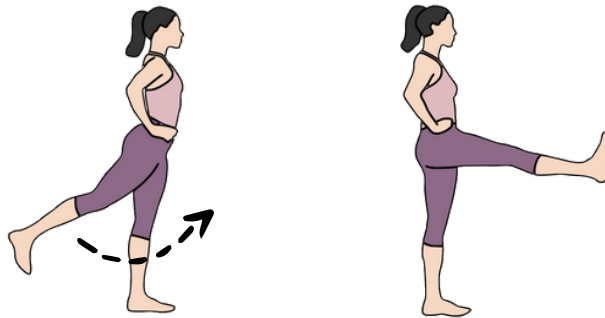
Rotating Z-Sit - 8 Reps



IT Band Stretch - 30 Seconds Each Side



Leg Swings - 8 Each Side



Downward Dog - 30 Seconds



Maintenance Routine

Day 1

- Pilates butterfly - 12 each side (resistance band optional)
- Side to side lunges - 12 reps
- Butterfly active stretch - 30 seconds
- Criss cross stretch - 30 seconds

Day 2

- Lunge-to-triangle - 12 each side
- Lunge squats - 12 each side
- Pike stretch against a wall - 30 seconds
- Kneeling lunge stretch - 30 seconds

Day 3

- Second squats - 12 reps
- Straddle opens - 12 reps
- Tabletop side leg lifts - 12 each side
- Straddle active stretch - 30 seconds

Day 4

- Fire hydrants - 12 each side (resistance band optional)
- Figure 4 pulses - 12 each side
- Pidgeon stretch - 30 seconds
- Happy baby stretch - 30 seconds

Day 5

- No hands lunge - 30 seconds each side
- Laying battements - 12 each side
- Leg hold active stretch - 30 seconds each side
- Front splits - 30 seconds each side

Day 6

- Side extensions - 12 each side
- Side kneeling lunges - 12 each side
- Straddle side stretch - 30 seconds each side
- Middle split - 30 seconds

Day 7

- Rotating z-sit - 8 reps
- Leg swings - 8 each side
- IT band stretch - 30 seconds each side
- Downward dog - 30 seconds