

CAT/COW OR HILL/VALLEY

Do it Right!
Exercises you Should Do

Difference between doing a movement and stretch: In a stretch the end position is held for 15+ seconds, while a movement is a slow back and forth motion with no end hold position.



Types (progression): Also known as the Yoga Poses Marjaryasana (Cat Pose) and Bitilasana (Cow Pose). This movement/stretch is again one of my favorites movements/stretches to do especially after exercising. I consider it a foundation exercise and a restorative movement. **Performance:** You can hold it for 15 or more seconds to make it a stretch, 1-3 x sets. As a movement you can go in and out of top (CAT) and bottom (COW) positions for several or more repetitions **Form:** Starting Position: ON floor, position your knees and feet hip-width apart, with your feet dorsi-flexed (toes pointing towards your body) or away. Slowly lean forward to place your hands on the mat, positioning them directly under your shoulders at shoulder-width with your hands facing forward. Reposition your hands and knees as necessary so that your knees are directly under your hips and hands are directly under your shoulders. Gently stiffen your core and abdominal muscles to position your spine in a neutral position, avoiding any sagging or arching. Upward (Cat) Phase: Gently exhale and contract your abdominal muscles, pushing your spine upwards towards the ceiling and hold this position for 5 - 15 seconds . Allow your head to fall towards your chest, maintaining alignment with the spine. Downward (Cow) Phase: Slowly relax and yield to the effects of gravity. Let your stomach fall towards the floor (increasing the arch in your low back) and allow your shoulder blades to fall together (move towards the spine). Hold this position for 5 - 15 seconds before returning to your starting position (see form).

The cat-cow exercise is a spinal mobilization exercise that helps a person “loosen” their spine. This exercise is considered a great flow when your body needs a break. It is said to improve posture and balance — ideal for those with back pain. Good form includes the integration of the cervical spine with the lumbar and thoracic spine. All three sections of the spine should be flexed and extended together. This motion reduces spine viscosity (internal resistance and friction) and “floss” the nerve roots as they outlet at each lumbar level. Research suggests that 5-8 cycles is often sufficient to reduce most viscous-frictional stresses. **The benefits of this synchronized breath movement will also help you relax and ease some of the day’s stress and it will increase mobility. The benefit of the exercise is the absence of joint compression during movement BECAUSE YOUR ARE NOT STANDING. When we are standing up our body weight is compressing spinal structures.**