

# Schiller Technique

**Gentle gravitational exercises**  
to reposition your body,  
highlight problem areas  
& reduce tension

Restore correct  
spinal posture

Stretch  
connective tissue  
around  
your joints

Maintain correct  
body balance  
and mobility



## **What patients say about the Schiller Technique...**

*"I suffered a trapped nerve which led to constant pain down my left arm. I saw other chiropractors and consultants who tried everything including drugs, ice and heat treatments, but it only helped a bit.*

*After 10 months of pain, I was introduced to Linda Schiller. During one session she asked me to lie flat on the floor in the 'baby position'.*

*To say I was sceptical would be an understatement! But it turned out to be the best thing for me to do. The first time I got up after lying on the floor for a while, I found my pain had decreased, and I felt lighter and looser.*

*Doing this simple exercise has given me back some control as it is something I can do for myself as part of my treatment. This has helped me to regain the confidence I severely lacked. More importantly, it has helped with the pain and cut out the need for me to take strong painkillers every afternoon.*

*It may sound or look funny to just lie on the floor, but it is by far the best of all the treatments I have had, as it offers the most relief."*

**Karen Walsh**

## How to use this booklet

Find a **calm, quiet room** and clear plenty of space on the floor. You don't need a yoga mat or any special props, but may wish to lie on a towel if you don't have carpet on the floor.

Simply lie down, close your eyes, and take at least **three slow deep breaths** as you relax completely into each position. Breathe slowly and deeply, feeling your ribs expand with each breath. You can stay in each position for anything from one minute up to around seven minutes.

*Top tip: It's important to repeat the exercises evenly on both sides, to maintain body balance.*

The entire sequence should take about **one hour** but if you just do the positions your body needs most, it may only take 10-15 minutes. Ideally, you should do these positions at least once a week, if not every day.

*Top tip: Everybody will feel something different*

All the positions in this booklet are totally natural, using **passive stretches** where your body is supported by the floor.

You should aim to do them with no effort at all. You simply relax into each position, and let **gravity** do the work for you.

*Top tip: Just go as far as your body can without forcing it.*

It's normal to feel **slight discomfort** during any stretch, as a sign that the positions are working.

If you experience actual **pain**, it highlights an area that needs to be more flexible or needs corrective attention. In this case, you should stop and mark the problem area on the relevant outline diagram, to show your chiropractor, osteopath or health professional where it hurts.

*Top tip: You can use the Schiller Technique to monitor your own weaknesses and strengths, or to diagnose areas for your health practitioner to work on.*

## About the Schiller Technique

**Linda Schiller** was inspired to devise this easy stretching technique by watching the positions taken by her babies. She noticed how they naturally placed their bodies to counteract the foetal position and aid upright posture. We've lost this body self-awareness with our modern lifestyle, hunched over desks and computers, which takes us back to the curled foetal position. By passive stretching regularly, we can counteract this effect and regain good posture and mobility.

1

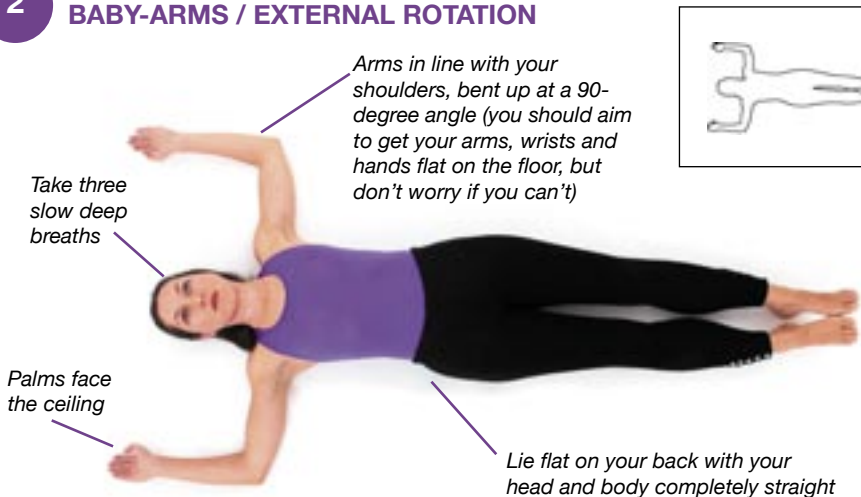
## BASIC POSITION



This should feel completely comfortable. Any discomfort highlights an area of tension e.g. between your shoulder blades, down your arms or in your lower back.

2

## BABY-ARMS / EXTERNAL ROTATION



Opens the chest and loosens any restriction in shoulder blades, shoulders and upper back. Ideal posture correction if you work hunched over a computer or desk.

3

### ARMS ABOVE HEAD

Arms above your head (bring your shoulders down away from your ears as much as possible)

Take three slow deep breaths

Lie flat on your back with your head and body completely straight



Palms face the ceiling



This position stretches your upper back, shoulder girdle, lower back and chest muscles.

4

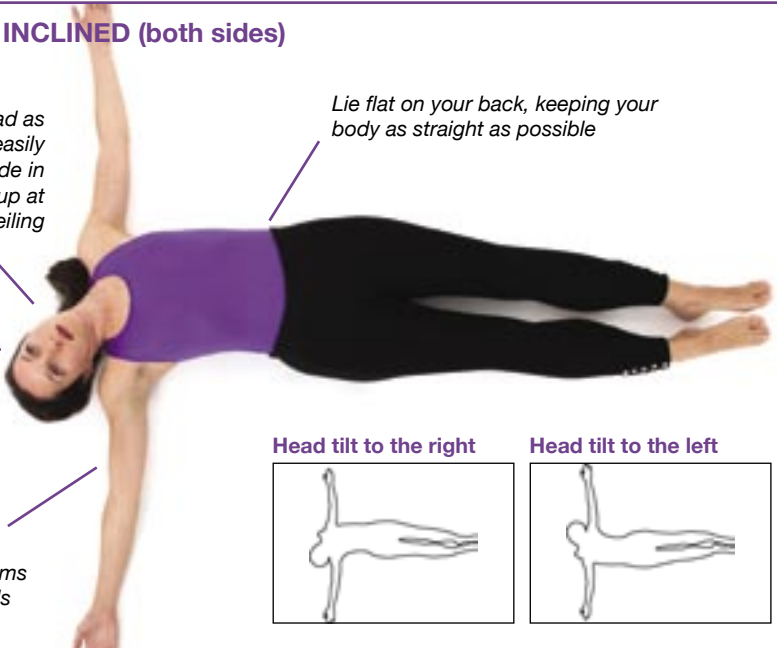
### HEAD INCLINED (both sides)

Tilt your head as far as it will easily go to each side in turn, looking up at the ceiling

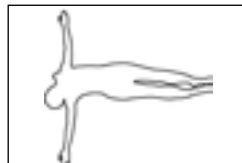
Lie flat on your back, keeping your body as straight as possible

Take three slow deep breaths

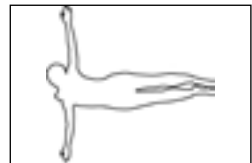
Arms out in line with your shoulders, palms facing upwards



Head tilt to the right



Head tilt to the left



When you tilt your head to the right, it stretches the neck, left trapezius and muscles down the left arm. When you tilt your head to the left, it stretches the opposite side.

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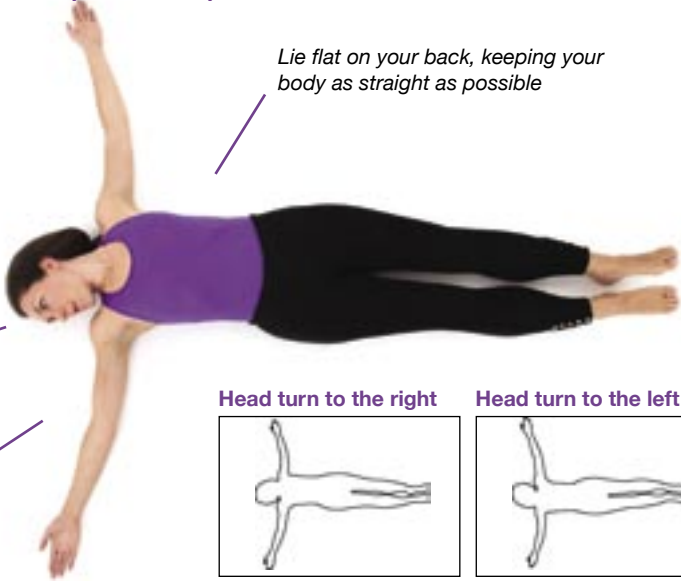
## HEAD TURNED (both sides)

Turn your head as far as it will easily go to each side in turn, looking along your outstretched arm

Lie flat on your back, keeping your body as straight as possible

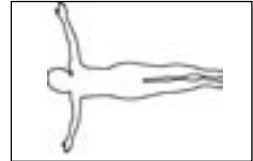
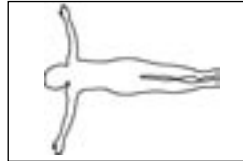
Take three slow deep breaths

Arms out in line with your shoulders, palms facing upwards



Head turn to the right

Head turn to the left



When you turn your head to the right, it stretches the neck and muscles on your left side. When you turn your head to the left, it stretches the muscles on your right.

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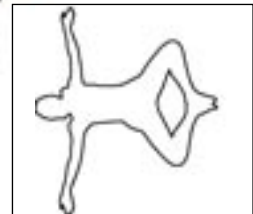
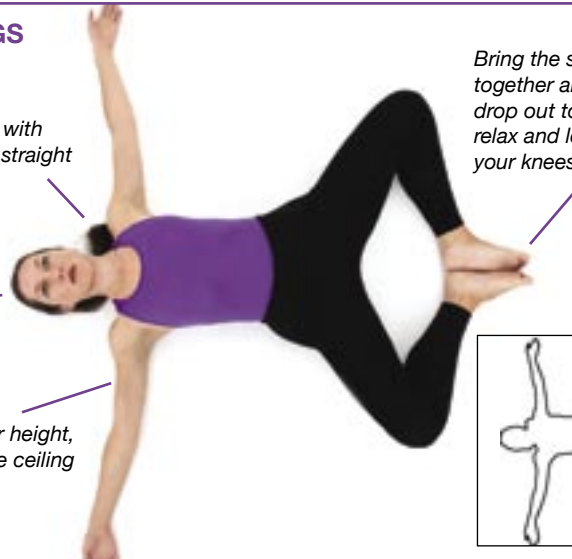
## FROG-LEGS

Lie flat on your back with your head and body straight

Take three slow deep breaths

Arms out at shoulder height, with palms facing the ceiling

Bring the soles of your feet together and let your knees drop out to the sides. Just relax and let gravity bring your knees towards the floor.



This position stretches your inner thighs, hips, groin and pelvis.

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### 'BABY' POSITION

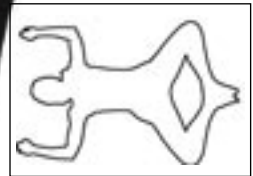
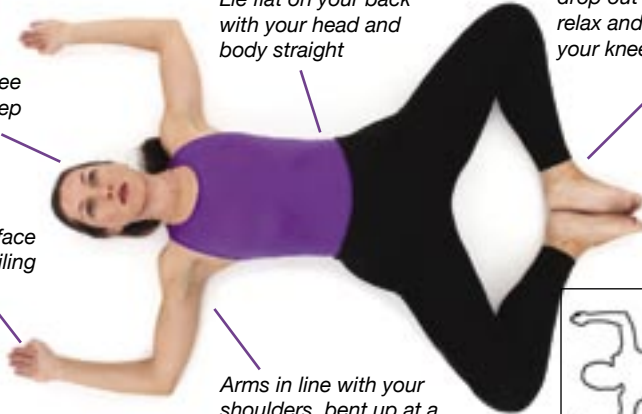
Take three slow deep breaths

Palms face the ceiling

Lie flat on your back with your head and body straight

Arms in line with your shoulders, bent up at a 90-degree angle

Bring the soles of your feet together and let your knees drop out to the sides. Just relax and let gravity bring your knees towards the floor.



One of the most important positions, it corrects posture and improves hip and shoulder mobility.

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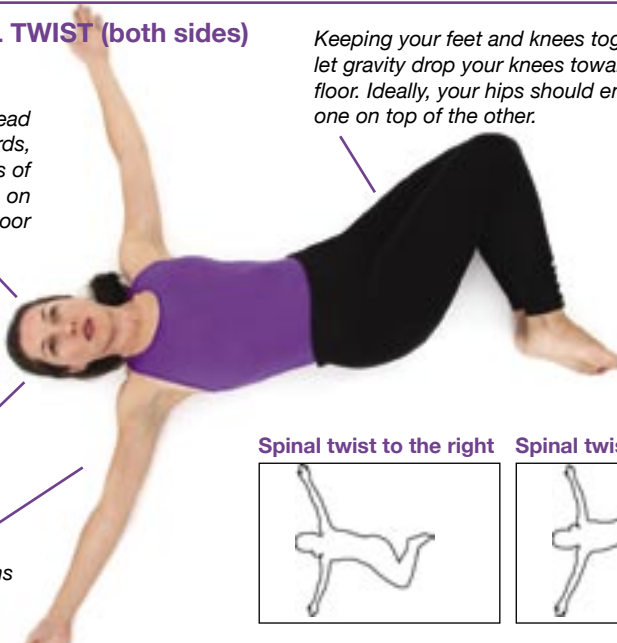
### SPINAL TWIST (both sides)

Keep your head looking upwards, and the backs of both shoulders on the floor

Take three slow deep breaths

Arms out in line with your shoulders, palms facing upwards

Keeping your feet and knees together, let gravity drop your knees towards the floor. Ideally, your hips should end up one on top of the other.



Spinal twist to the right



Spinal twist to the left



Stretches your lower back and glutes as well as some abdominal muscles and your ilio-tibial band (ITB). Be sure to do this stretch on both sides, to balance your body.

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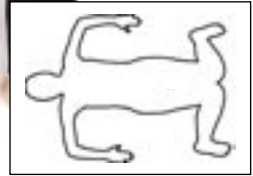
## INTERNAL ROTATION

Lie flat on your back with your head and body straight

Take three slow deep breaths

Arms in line with your shoulders, bent down at a 90-degree angle with palms facing the floor

Bring your knees up together keeping your hips and the soles of your feet on the floor, and walk your feet apart as far as you can, with your knees still touching



The internal rotation of your arms and hips stretches your shoulder girdle and outside hips.

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## FIGURE FOUR (both sides)

Lie flat on the floor with your body straight and head in line, looking up to the ceiling

Take three slow deep breaths

The arm on the side of the leg that's working should be out at shoulder height, palm up

Bring the sole of your left foot to rest against the inside of your right knee; let gravity bring your left knee towards the floor (repeat other side)



Extend your right arm diagonally, palm up (repeat other side)

Figure 4 to the right

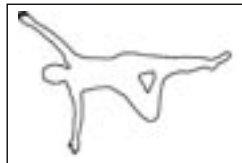


Figure 4 to the left

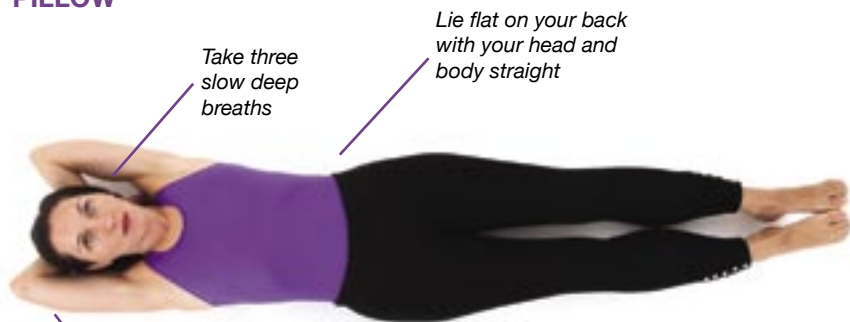


Stretches your groin, hip and opposite chest muscles, and is good to center your body. Be sure to do this stretch on both sides, for balance.



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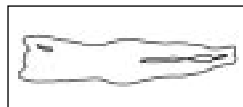
## 'PILLOW'



Take three slow deep breaths

Lie flat on your back with your head and body straight

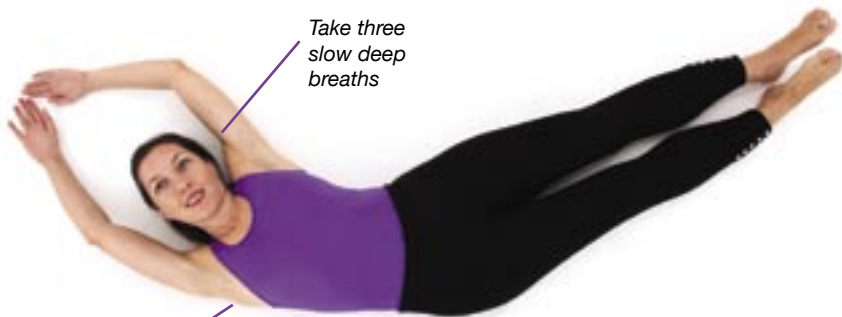
Cross your wrists behind your head, with your fingers against your upper back. Let gravity drop your elbows towards the floor.



This restful position stretches your triceps, underarms and shoulder girdle.

12

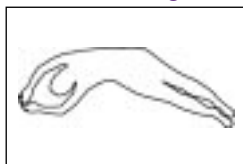
## 'BANANA' (both sides)



Take three slow deep breaths

Lie on your back. Raise your arms above your head, palms facing up, and tilt your whole body to the side (repeat on the other side). Just bend as far as you can and relax there.

Banana to the right



Banana to the left



Stretches along the entire side of your body, from your toes to your fingertips. Be sure to do this stretch on both sides, to balance your body.

13

### KNEES TO CHEST

Lie flat on your back, with your head and body straight, and arms by your sides with palms down.

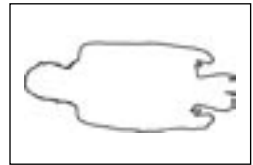
Take three slow deep breaths

Bend your knees up and over your body, keeping knees and ankles together. Don't pull your knees towards you, just let gravity do its work.



#### ALTERNATIVE

If you find this position difficult, try it with your feet against a wall instead



This position stretches your lower back and hips and is very good for people with lower back pain.

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### LOWER BODY STRETCH (both sides)

Take three slow deep breaths

Lie on your back with your head and body in line

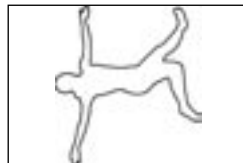
With your top leg straight, cross it over the other leg and rest your foot on the floor

Bend the underneath leg

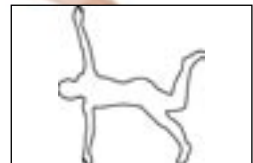
Arms out to the sides in line with your shoulders, palms facing upwards. Aim to keep the backs of both shoulders on the floor.



Lower body to the right



Lower body to the left



Stretches your glutes, lower back and ITB (side of your top leg). Remember to do this stretch on both sides to keep your body in balance.

15

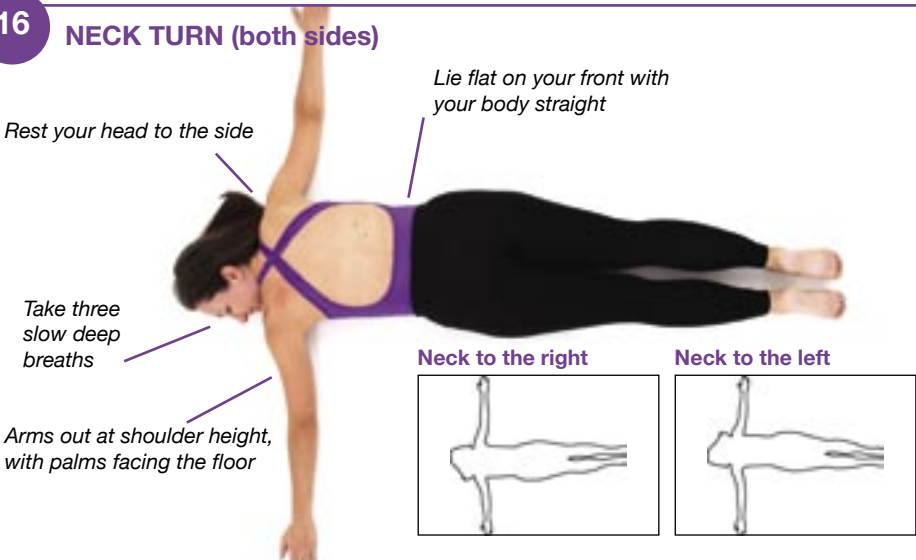
## 'STARFISH'



This position is popular for relaxation! It opens up all your meridians (energy lines) and stretches your inner thighs and chest.

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## NECK TURN (both sides)



Stretches your neck muscles and improves mobility in your neck. Pain in the back of your neck can indicate a joint problem. Be sure to repeat the position on each side.

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## HEELS TO BUTTOCKS

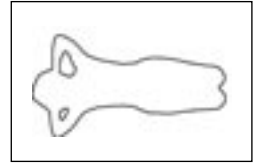
*Bend your arms and put one hand on top of the other, palms facing down*

*Take three slow deep breaths*

*Keep your head straight, and rest your forehead on the back of your hands to keep your spine straight*

*Lie flat on your front, keeping your body as straight as possible*

*Bend your knees, and let gravity take your heels towards your buttocks. Keep your feet relaxed.*



This stretches the front of your legs, quads and hip flexors, and extends your lower back.

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## FACE DOWN FROG-LEGS

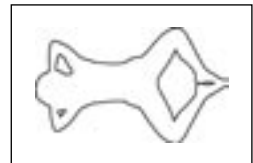
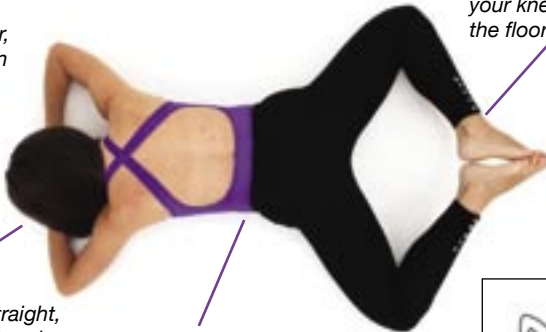
*Bend your arms and put one hand on top of the other, palms facing down*

*Take three slow deep breaths*

*Keep your head straight, and rest your forehead on the back of your hands to keep your spine straight*

*Bring the soles of your feet together and let your knees drop out to the sides. Just relax and let gravity bring your knees / feet towards the floor.*

*Lie flat on your front, keeping your body as straight as possible*



This stretches your hips, groin and glutes. It will show any problems there may be with your hips or lower back. CAUTION. Don't try this if you've had a hip replacement.

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## LEG OUT (both sides)

Bend your arms and put one hand on top of the other, palms facing down

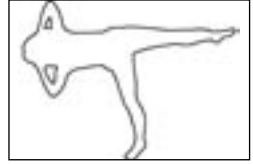
Take three slow deep breaths

Keep your head straight, and rest your forehead on the back of your hands to keep your spine straight

Stretch one leg out straight, aiming for a 90-degree angle (depending on your flexibility)

Lie flat on your front, keeping both hips on the floor

Leg out to the right



Leg out to the left



This position stretches your groin, hip and leg (alternatively it can be done lying on your back).

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## 'TREE' (both sides)

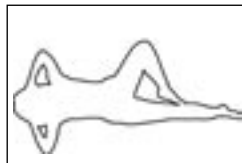
Take three slow deep breaths

Lie flat on your front, keeping your body as straight as possible

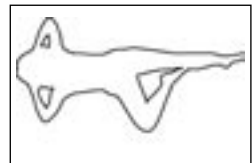
Bend your knee (keeping it on the floor) and place the sole of that foot alongside your other leg, as high as you comfortably can

Bend your arms and put one hand on top of the other, palms facing down. With your head straight, and rest your forehead on the back of your hands.

Tree to the right



Tree to the left



This position stretches your groin and hip flexors.

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### BASIC SIDE POSITION (both sides)

*Straighten both arms above your head, and rest your head on your lower arm*

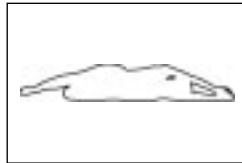
*Take three slow deep breaths*

*Bend your underneath leg backwards, keeping your top leg straight and your knees together*

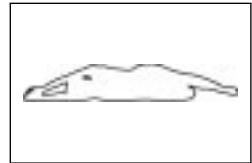


*Lie on your side, keeping the front of your body in a straight line (if you feel the floor is too hard for comfort, you can lie on a folded towel, yoga mat or thin cushion)*

**Basic side to the right**



**Basic side to the left**



This stretches the shoulder and hip that are on top, as well as some lower back muscles. Roll over and repeat on the other side to balance your body.

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### HIP & KNEE STRETCH (both sides)

*Stretch your lower arm out straight, and rest your head on it*

*Lie on your side, keeping your body as straight as possible*

*Bend both legs behind you, keeping your knees together. Your knees should be in line with your hips, not in front of them.*

*Take three slow deep breaths*

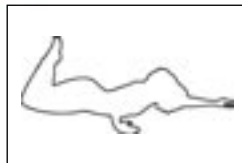
*Place your upper hand in front of you for balance*



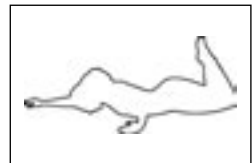
**SIDE VIEW**



**Hip & knee stretch right**



**Hip & knee stretch left**



This stretches your front hip flexor and quads, right down to the connective tissue in your knees.

**HAMSTRING STRETCH (both sides)**

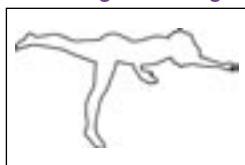
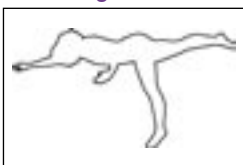
Lie on your side, with the front of your body straight, and rest your head on your lower arm

Take three slow deep breaths

Place your upper hand in front of you for balance

Keep your underneath leg straight, in line with the rest of your body

Slide your top leg up as far as you can, keeping it straight, with your hips in line and your foot on the floor

**Hamstring stretch right****Hamstring stretch left****SIDE VIEW**

This position stretches your glutes and is an excellent stretch for your hamstrings. Repeat on each side to balance your body.

**'BIG WALK' (both sides)**

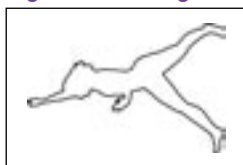
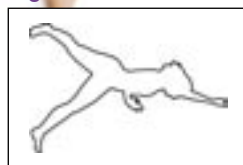
Rest your head on your outstretched underneath arm

Lie on your side, with your body straight

Keeping both legs straight, 'walk' your lower leg in front of you as far as you can, and your top leg out behind you. Both feet remain on the floor.

Take three slow deep breaths

Place your upper hand in front of you for balance

**SIDE VIEW****Big walk to the right****Big walk to the left**

This stretches your top hip, hip flexors and ITB (sides of your legs). You can also do this stretch 'crossed' with your top leg behind and lower leg in front if you wish.

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### QUAD STRETCH (both sides)

Stretch your lower arm out straight, and rest your head on it

Lie on your side, keeping your body as straight as possible

With your top leg slightly behind you, and lower leg slightly in front, bend both knees to 90-degrees, keeping them both on the floor (just let gravity help).

Take three slow deep breaths

Place your upper hand in front of you for balance

Quad stretch right

Quad stretch left



SIDE VIEW



This position gives a good stretch to your quads (the muscles in front of your thighs). Repeat on each side to balance your body.

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### SHOULDER STRETCH (both sides)

Rest your head on your outstretched underneath arm

Internally rotate the arm that's on top and drop it behind you, with the back of your hand against your lower back

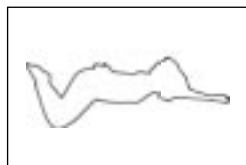
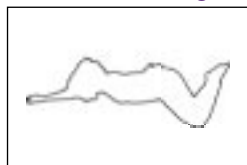
Take three slow deep breaths

Lie on your side, keeping your body straight and head in line

Bend both legs, keeping your knees and feet together

Shoulder stretch right

Shoulder stretch left



This stretch is particularly good for people with shoulder problems. Remember to repeat it on both sides for balance.



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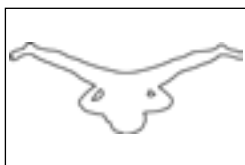
### INNER THIGH STRETCH (against wall)

With your legs straight, let your feet drop apart as wide as you can, using the wall for support

Rest the palms of your hands on the floor or against your abdomen

Lie flat on your back with your body and head in line and your buttocks as close as possible to the wall

Take three slow deep breaths



Stretches your groin and inner thighs.

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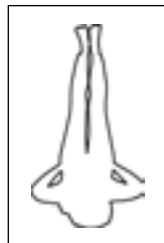
### LOWER BACK RELAX (against wall)

Rest your heels against the wall with your legs straight, at 90-degrees to your body

Lie flat on your back with your body and head in line and your buttocks as close as possible to the wall

Rest the palms of your hands on the floor or against your abdomen

Take three slow deep breaths



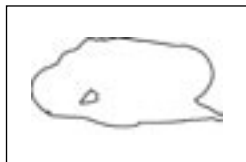
This position relaxes your lower back and helps tired legs.

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### 'THE BALL'

Rest your forehead onto your upturned palms

Take three slow deep breaths



Rest your elbows and forearms on the floor, with palms facing up

Bend all the way forwards keeping your back straight

Sit your bottom onto your heels (you may need to put a rolled towel or thin cushion in between)



A restful position that stretches your lower back. This is quite an advanced pose, so don't worry if you can't get into it.

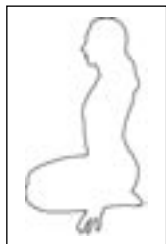
30

### SHIN STRETCH

Take three slow deep breaths

Keep your back up straight, with your shoulders down, and head in line

Sit on your heels (with a cushion under your bottom if you need to)

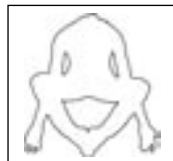


This position stretches from the front of your shins right down to your feet.

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### SPINAL STRETCH

SIDE VIEW



With straight arms, rest the backs of your hands on the floor

Lean forwards and let your head rest down

Knees out and soles of the feet together, in 'frog' pose

Take three slow deep breaths



Great relaxation, this position stretches your full spine, neck, back and hips.

Disclaimer: The exercises provided on this website are for educational and entertainment purposes only, and are not to be interpreted as a recommendation for a specific treatment plan, product, or course of action. Exercise is not without its risks, and this or any other exercise program may result in injury. To reduce the risk of injury, before beginning this or any exercise program, please consult a healthcare provider for appropriate exercise prescription and safety precautions.

## About Linda Schiller, MtechChiro, CCSP, D.C.

Linda Schiller has been a practising clinician since 1998. She founded the Croydon Chiropractic Clinic in 2001, in London, UK, where she has treated a wide range of conditions for professional sportspeople as well as the general public.



Her most notable patients have included Barry Sheene (world motorcycling champion), Darrin Mooney (singer from Primal Scream), Simon Jordan (Crystal Palace Football Club), David Childs (professional golfer), Phillip Davies (gold medallist in gymnastics at the Special Olympics) and many others. She has also worked as a backstage chiropractor at the 0<sub>2</sub> and Wembley arenas, treating and caring for dancers.

While practising in South Africa, she treated international surfers at the Gunston 500 (world surfing championships) and worked on competitors in the World Champion Strong Man Competition. On a local club level, she has treated rugby teams, hockey teams, marathon runners, cyclists and athletes. As well as sports stars, she has also treated thousands of individual patients.

She conducted unique research into the effectiveness of spinal manipulative therapy on upper back pain, and her study was published in the Journal of Manipulative Physical Therapy.

Linda holds a post-graduate diploma in Sports Chiropractic (CCSP) and, in 1999, completed a six-year Masters Degree in Chiropractic Technology at the Department of Chiropractic, Technikon Natal, South Africa. The course covered all aspects of human sciences, biochemistry, microbiology, x-ray, diagnosis, chiropractic, physiotherapeutic intervention, rehabilitation, massage and wellness care (through education, exercise and living a healthy lifestyle). This in-depth study has given her a sound training in the science, art and philosophy of chiropractic.

Linda's philosophy is to help her patients to help themselves. She believes in the holistic approach, and considers all aspects of the neuro-musculo-skeletal systems together with lifestyle choice, nutrition and thought processing, and the affect they have on health.

*"Eat better, move better and think better to good health." Linda Schiller*

All aspects of Linda's life reflect her interest in helping the human body to work better. As well as her chiropractic career, she is also a qualified sports and remedial massage therapist, and spent six years working as an aerobics instructor, water aerobics instructor and personal trainer. She enjoys regular ballet classes and walking in the English countryside. As a mum, she recognised that adults should be able to enjoy the same range of movement as her two small children. This revelation helped inspire the Schiller Technique.