

Floor Sitting

For this month, we are going to challenge you to spend 30 minutes each day sitting on the floor. Now sitting on the floor for 30 minutes each day sounds like a lot of time. However, with the average American spending 5 hours a day watching television, there is plenty of time to “practice” floor sitting. What can you gain from sitting on the floor? The answer is improved flexibility in the hips and pelvis. Sitting on the floor seems like such a trivial thing, but as we age it becomes harder and harder to do comfortably. This is because we tend to spend less time sitting on the floor and more time in chairs and on sofas. What’s more, the greater your need to use your hands and knees to get up from the floor, the higher your risk of dying from all causes. So whether you’re reading, watching TV, eating, or having a conversation, spend some time on the floor to improve your mobility.

At first, you may be too stiff in your hips to sit comfortably for any period of time. If that is the case, try sitting on a few pillows or folded up blankets. As your hips loosen up over time, you can take a pillow or two away.

Below is an illustration from anthropologist Gordon Hewes that shows how different people rest from around the world. Mix up some of the postures during your 30 minutes each day to work on your mobility in different ways.



Cossack Squat

The Cossack Squat is a great exercise for building strength and flexibility in the hips and adductor muscles. It is a good exercise to work into your warm-up routine prior to working out.

Start with your feet about $2 \frac{1}{2}$ times the width of your shoulder with your toes pointed outwards and your knees in line with them.



Begin by squatting toward your right side. Slowly move your weight onto your right leg until your left leg is straight, resting only on its heel. Next, slowly shift your weight back to your center and then onto your left leg, repeating the movement. Perform 2-3 sets of 6-12 repetitions on each leg. You will notice that at first you may not be able to go down very far. Just start where you are and try to get a little bit farther with each rep.

Do not lean your body too far forward as this places added stress on the knees. Instead, sit back and use your hips to handle most of the work.

Progressive Wrist Stretch

MOVE OF THE MONTH APRIL ISSUE 2014

These exercises will help improve flexibility of the muscles and tendons of the forearm and help prevent injury.

THE MOVE

1 Start in a kneeling position with the toes stretched back (doubles as a stretch to the plantar fascia).

2 With the elbows straight place the palms on the floor with the fingers pointed out to the side.

3 Keeping the elbows straight throughout, press through the palm of the hand and fingers and gently sit back towards your heels.

4 Gently rock back forward and repeat for 10 repetitions.



5 For the second set try rotating your hands back towards you knees (about 30-60 degrees) and perform 10 more reps.



6 On the third set, try to have the hands rotated about 60-90 degrees from the original position, and then perform 10 more repetitions.



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Short Foot

✘ Postural expert Vladimir Janda in his book “Muscle Function Testing recommends the short foot exercise” to build strength, stability and endurance in the muscles and tendons that support the arch.

THE MOVE

- Sit with good posture in a sturdy chair with both feet on the floor, your toes facing straight forward, and your knees bent to 90 degrees.
- Inhale, contract the muscles on the bottom of your right foot and lower legs to raise the arch of your foot without curling your toes. This position is called the short foot position. Hold this isometric muscle contraction for six seconds, then exhale and relax.
- Turn your lower leg slightly outward, inhale and again come to the short foot position. Hold for six seconds, exhale and relax.
- Next turn your lower leg inward, and perform another short foot position for six seconds.
- Repeat the identical series of exercises with your left foot.
- Reposition your feet an inch farther away from the chair, and perform repetitions in the straight, outward and inward ankle positions with both feet. After each series, inch your foot forward until you perform a total of five series with each foot. Sliding your feet farther away from the chair each rep works the muscles at slightly different angles.

Short Foot

The Band Pull-Apart

✘ The band pull-apart exercise improves shoulder function, posture and strengthen the upper back musculature (posterior delts). By adding the Band Pull-Apart to your regular stretching routine, you'll notice improved strength and mobility in just a few days and significant improvement in your overall shoulder health after a few weeks.

THE MOVE

- Begin with your arms extended straight out in front of you, holding the band with both hands.
- Start the movement by moving your hands out laterally to your sides. Keep your elbows straight as you perform the entire movement.
- Bring the band to your chest. Then pinch your shoulder blades down and back at the very end of the exercise.
- Pause momentarily and return to the starting position under control.
- Depending on the resistance of the band, perform 2-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions.

[The Band Pull-Apart](#)

Goblet Squat

Squatting is a basic human movement. It is also a movement that most Americans cannot perform properly or with ease. To be able to perform a full, deep squat, a lot of things have to

happen. The ankles have to be mobile enough to allow the knee to travel out and over the toes. The thigh muscles have to be strong to move and stabilize the knees and hips. Your hips need to be mobile enough to prevent rounded of the low back at the bottom. And you need core and back strength to maintain a neutral spine throughout the squat.

THE MOVE

☒ The goblet squat is an easy way to improve your ability to squat. Try performing this movement daily and reassess after a month and see how much stronger and easier it is to do. You can do one quick set during your lunch break or add 2-3 sets into your workouts. The idea is to be constantly developing the squat as a skill. Your hips, knees, and back will end up healthier for it.

The Goblet Squat

- Hold the dumbbell or kettlebell high against the chest
- Keep your chest up
- Have your feet slightly wider than shoulder width
- Feet can be turned out 0-30 degrees
- Sink down into the squat
- Drive your knee out while the elbows track inside of the knees
- Drive back up pushing through the heels
- Keep the chest up

[Goblet Squat](#)