

***Sample chapter excerpted from
“Stretch Your Clients”
by Peggy Lamb, MA, LMT, NCTMB
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LOW BACK & HIP



STRETCHES

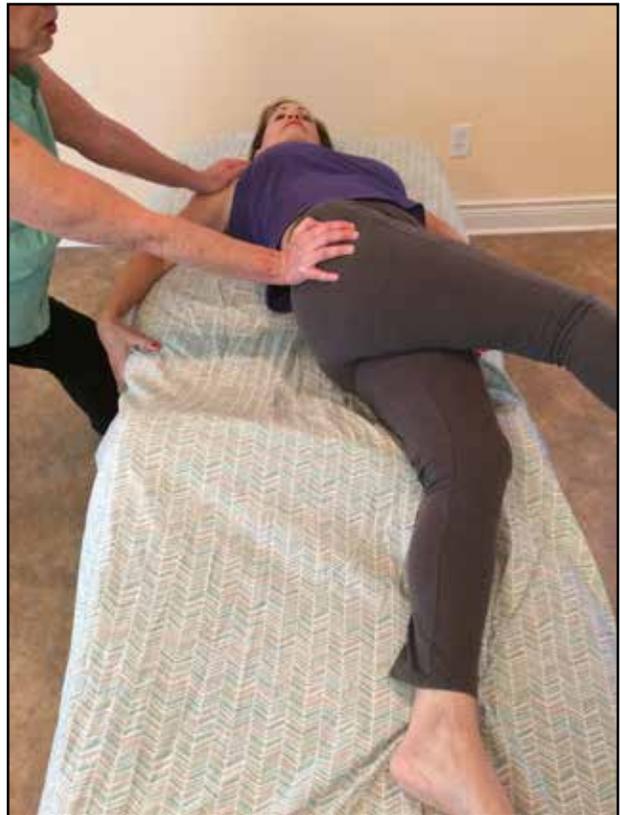
2. LUMBAR PORTION OF ERECTOR SPINAE, MULTIFIDI, ROTATORES AND GLUTEUS MAXIMUS STRETCH: ★

Client is supine.

Step 1: Flex the thigh to 90 degrees or less. With your downhill hand, gently push the client's hip away from you while your uphill hand stabilizes the client's torso by pressing down on the shoulder.

Step 2: Traction the iliac crest toward the feet as you push the hip away from you.

The amount you twist the client's hips depends on their flexibility. As always, solicit feedback from your client. In the photograph to the right, the therapist is standing on the side to be stretched, but this stretch can also be done standing on the opposite side (*shown below.*) If that is more comfortable, simply pull the client's hips towards you with one hand while stabilizing the torso with your other hand. Clients should be instructed to do this as an unassisted self-stretch by guiding the thigh across the body with the opposite arm.



Stretch shown with a drape. Notice that the therapist is stabilizing the torso by pressing on the shoulder, giving a gentle pectoralis major stretch to the client.

{Reminder: Stretch after you have massaged the muscle to be stretched.}

3. LUMBAR PORTION OF THE ERECTOR SPINAE, MULTIFIDI, ROTATOIRES, GLUTEUS MAXIMUS AND HAMSTRING STRETCH:

I often combine this stretch with the previous two stretches for a dynamic lower back series.

Client is supine. Lift the legs from beneath the ankles and slowly walk the legs around towards the client's head.

As you move the clients legs to the side of the table, they will naturally fall on top of one another. Hold for 15-30 seconds, then do the other side. It is important that the torso stays flat; if you see the client's torso twisting, instruct the client to stabilize the torso by holding onto the table. You



can have the client bend her knees for a less intense hamstring stretch. Bending the knees moves the stretch more into the low back and hips.

This stretch is one your clients will love and is easily integrated into a Swedish massage. Draping is a cinch - simply take the fitted sheet and wrap the ends around your client's feet (*shown below.*) Voila, you've created a foolproof drape!



Notice that the therapist's right hand is on the clients pelvis. She's gently tractioning and pressing the hips toward herself to create a variation which intensifies the lower back stretch.

{Reminder: Gently traction the joint before and during the stretch.}

7. QUADRATUS LUMBORUM, GLUTEUS MINIMUS AND MEDIUS and TENSOR FASCIAE LATAE/ILIO-TIBIAL BAND STRETCH: ★

Client is side-lying on the side opposite to be stretched and moves her body to the edge of the table. Guide the top leg to hang off the edge of the table. The knee needs to clear the table; sometimes it takes a bit of trial and error to achieve this while maintaining the client's alignment. If you're having trouble getting the knee to clear the table, ask her to scoot her upper body away from you and her rear end towards you. Stabilize the pelvis with your body to prevent rotation or over-arching of the lower back. A pillow under the clients' waist can help with positioning and increase the stretch. A pillow under the clients' waist can help with positioning and increase the stretch.

Step 1: Gently press down on the femur (less intense) or the calf (more intense) of the leg being stretched with your downhill hand. The client's upper arm must be above the ribs, reaching up towards her head. With your uphill hand traction the iliac crest away from the ribs. Hold for 15-30 seconds.

Step 2: Move your upper hand to the rib case (see below) and traction it away from the pelvis, while **maintaining** the pressure on the femur or calf. To come out of the stretch lift the leg back onto the table so the client does not engage the muscle.

If letting the leg hang is too painful, arrange a chair for the ankle to rest on for about a minute, then see if the leg can hang without pain. Clients should be instructed to do this as an unassisted self-stretch by letting the leg hang off the edge of a bed.



Step 2:
Traction the rib case away from the pelvis with your upper hand.



11B. ILIOPSOAS AND THIGH FLEXOR STRETCH SIDE-LYING:



For some clients and/or therapists, this side-lying stretch may be more appropriate.

Client is side-lying on the *opposite* side of the one you want to stretch.

Step 1: Ask your client to bend her knee and flex the thigh of the *bottom* leg to stabilize the pelvis.

Step 2: Extend the top leg as far back as comfortably possible to lengthen the iliopsoas and secondary thigh flexors. You may wrap the leg around your waist to help hold the weight of the leg. Your uphill hand can either apply a gentle pressure toward the head on the ishium or apply a gentle traction toward the feet depending on what feels best to your client. Your other hand and arm pull the top leg back into thigh extension.

