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# PAIN-FREE BINDING GUIDE

a free resource for the trans &  
gender diverse community



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# Safe Binding Practices

- Don't wear your binder overnight
- Try not to bind for more than 8 hours per day
- Taking breaks helps prevent skin irritation, tissue breakdown, breathing problems, and back aches
- Avoid binding while exercising if possible



## Introduction

# Movement Guide

Being trans & gender diverse almost always comes with upper back tightness. Some of us bind daily, we most likely have heightened stress & anxiety, and those who experience dysphoria might also have postural problems from concealing certain features.

The same techniques for reducing this upper back tightness could also be used for people who:

- have back, shoulder, or neck pain
- have had top surgery
- experience headaches
- experience anxiety



Stretches are only one aspect of reducing pain and tightness in the thoracic spine. Strengthening weaker muscles in your back and core, as well as practicing breathing exercises should also be practiced for the best outcome.

You don't have to do all of the exercises in this guide every day. In fact, I don't want this to be overwhelming to think about, because movement should bring you joy, not make you fearful or ashamed.

Simply read through it and pick 2-3 that you want to learn, or practice more often. Once you've perfected those, come back and choose some more.

# SUPERHUMAN BACK EXTENSION

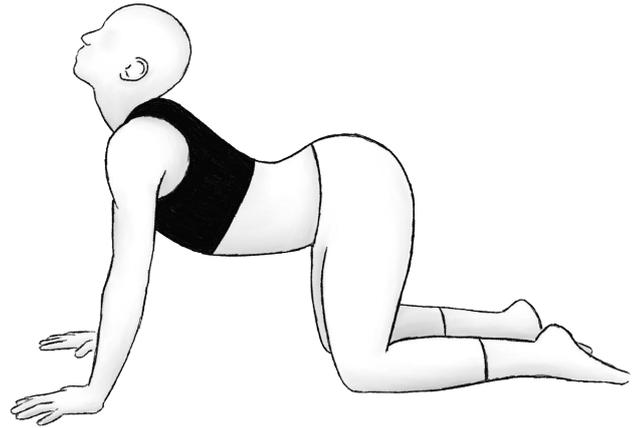
This exercise is commonly known as 'superman extensions', but I made it gender inclusive because it was easy to do!

People of all fitness levels can benefit from this movement as it can be progressed or regressed; by changing the tempo of the movement, or by incorporating bands or weights.

The areas targeted are the lower back, glutes, abs, & hamstrings. Here is how to do it:

1. Lie on the floor in the prone (face down) position with your legs straight and your arms out in front of you.
2. Keeping your head in a neutral position (keep looking at the floor), slowly lift your arms and legs off the floor by contracting your back muscles and glutes.
3. Breathe out as you lift up, and hold for 1-3 seconds. Breathe in as you lower your limbs back down.
4. Repeat for 8-12 reps for 2-3 sets (rounds).





# Cat Cow

This is an exercise to work on your thoracic mobility. This helps us breathe better, reduces tension in the neck, prevents headaches, and much more.

1. Start on all fours & drop your head down. Push your spine through the middle of your shoulders. You should feel a stretch or some tension in your back.
2. Then drop through your shoulders and push your whole spine to curve the opposite way. You should feel a stretch in your front ribs & belly.
3. Breathe in as your head goes up, & out as your head goes down.

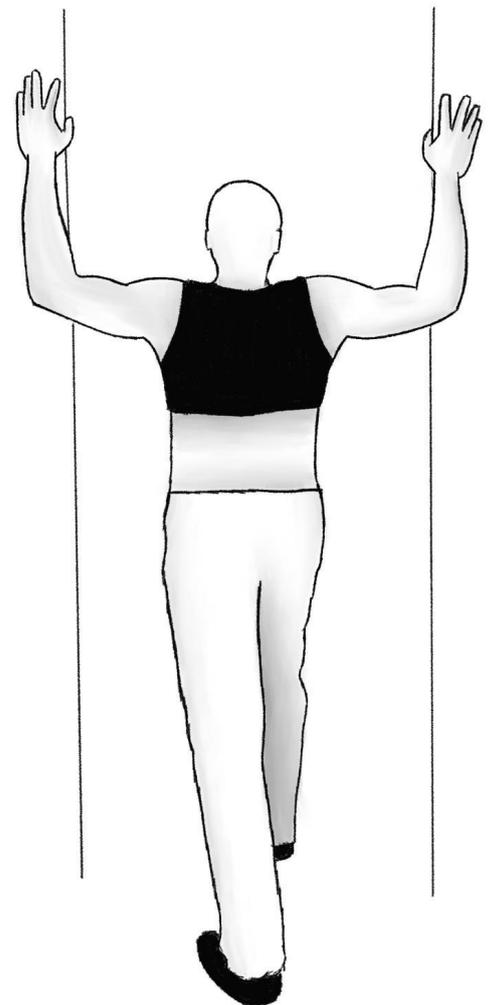
# Doorway Chest Stretch

This is a stretch for your rotator cuff muscles, pectorals, and anterior deltoid.

You can do this one arm at a time, or with both arms pressing on the doorframe.

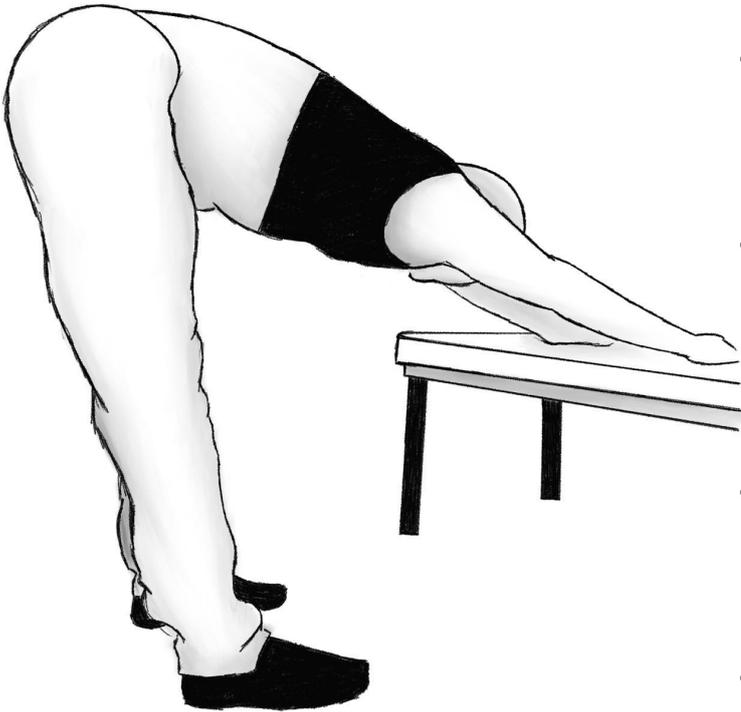
How to do it:

- Stand next to the doorframe as if you are about to walk through it.
- Bring your hands up so that your forearms and elbows are resting against each side of the doorway. Your elbow and shoulder should be at around 90 degree angles.
- Step through the doorway if you are doing both sides or you can turn your body away from your elbow if you are doing one side.
- You should feel a stretch between the chest and shoulder.
- Hold it for 20-30 seconds. Repeat on the other side if you were only doing one side.



**Note: If the elbow is below the height of the shoulder, it will not target either muscles and be an ineffective Pec Stretch.**

How to do it:



- Place your hands down on a table, countertop, or flat on a wall.
- Stretch back with your head between your arms, and push your armpits down to the ground.
- You should feel a stretch in your armpits and in your lower ribs.
- For a stronger stretch, repeat the exercise with your elbows and triceps on the counter (or bench).

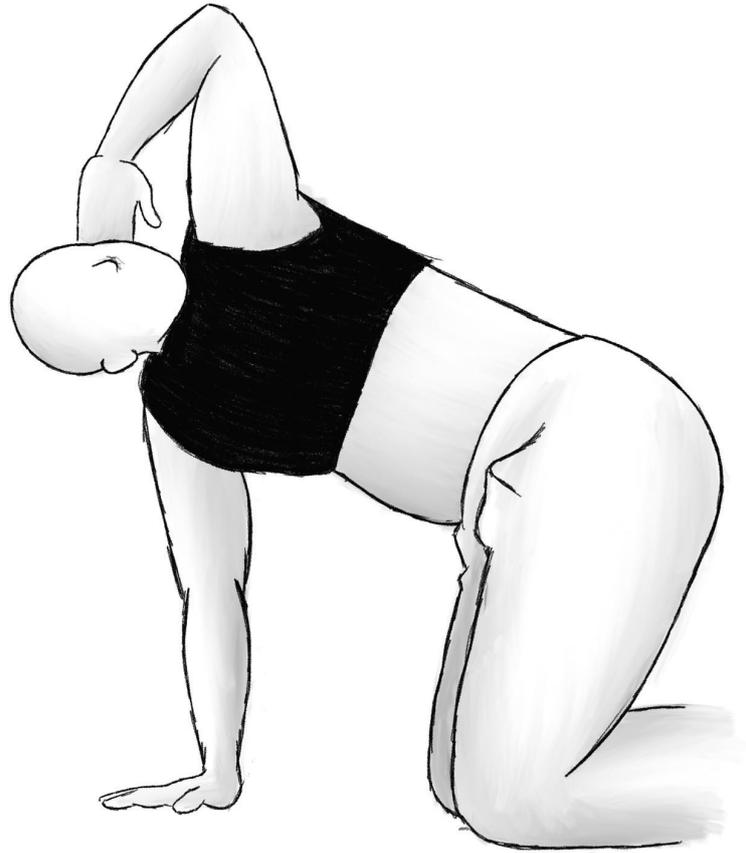
**Note: This can also be done with your palms flat on a wall at chest height.**

# Wall/Table Lat Stretch

This is a stretch for your Latissimus Dorsi.

How to do it:

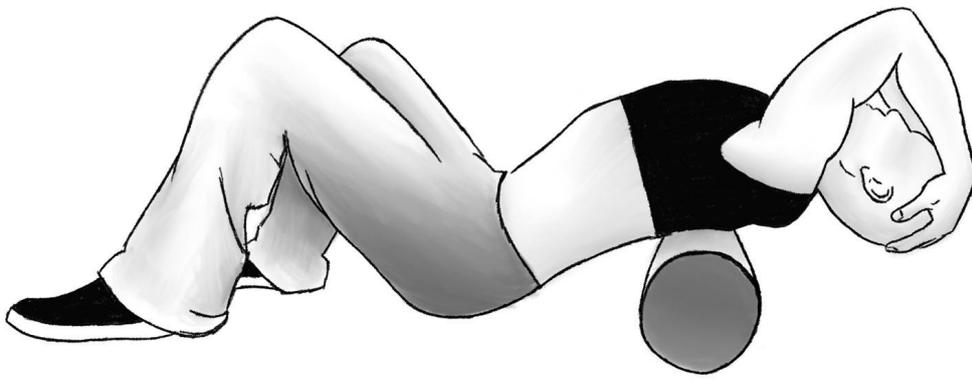
- Twist your body with your hand on the back of your head & elbow fully flared out.
- Look up at the ceiling and go as far as you can
- Then bring your elbow to the opposite hand whilst breathing out.
- Repeat 10 times per side.



**Note: You can also do this sitting crosslegged with your hands behind your head.**

# Quadruped Thoracic Rotation

This is a stretch for your thoracic spine & ribs.



How to do it:

- You will need a foam roller or a tightly rolled up bath/beach towel placed underneath your upper back.
- Let your arms fall out to the side and then over the top of your head.
- Stay in this position until the tension has released
- Slide your body further down so the pressure is at the base of your neck where it meets the shoulders.
- Repeat with your arms out to the sides (horizontal) for the space between your shoulder blades.

**Note: Don't press your neck into the foam roller.**

# Foam Rolling Tension Release

Foam rolling is simple self massage that helps to maintain muscle length and increase flexibility.

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I hope that you learnt something new, passed on some valuable information to a friend or bodyworker, or simply released some tension that was causing you discomfort.

If you are having, or have had Top Surgery, you can check out my online program "**6 Weeks to Optimal Top Surgery Results**", which is available on my website.



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