

Exercises to Start the Day

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FIVE IN THE MORNING

Stretches to ease the pain of waking.

Getting up in the morning can be the most dreaded and difficult part of the day. This can be amplified by back discomfort and stiffness, hip or leg pain or just general aches. But rest easy, there are some basic things you can do to help ease the pain and stiffness of the morning; things you can do before your feet ever hit the floor.

The exercises discussed here aim to increase movement in areas that may have gotten stiff during the course of the night. As we sleep, muscles can get tight and stiff, joint fluid that normally lubricates the joint surfaces can become a little thicker, and ligaments can lose some elasticity. Getting these structures moving without placing a lot of stress on them is important and helpful for function. Try these movements before getting out of bed each day for improvements in stiffness and pain. These will be especially helpful if you tend to feel better after you are up and around for awhile. They will help you feel better, sooner.

[Morning Workout Routine](#)

- 1. Trunk rotation.** Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet on the bed. Roll the knees side to side as far as possible while keeping the knees together. Do 10 repetitions to each side.
- 2. Ankle pumps.** Lie on your back with your legs out straight. Pump the feet down and up as far as possible holding each for about 10 seconds. Do about 10 repetitions.
CAUTION: Do not point the toes down so hard that the calves cramp.
- 3. Single knee to chest.** This is safer on your back than the double leg version. Pull one knee toward your chest and hold for about 20 seconds. Repeat for the opposite side and do each side 3 times.
- 4. Arm slides.** Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet on the bed, with the back of the arms on the bed slide them up over your head slowly. This would be similar to making snow angels using your arms only. Do about 10 repetitions.
- 5. Foot slides.** Lie on your back with the legs out straight. Slowly slide one heel toward the buttocks and then straighten the leg. Repeat for the opposite side and do each leg about 10 times.

Finally, sit at the side of the bed for a few seconds and slowly come to your feet. Most importantly, have a great day!

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