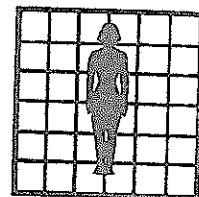


# 6

## ALIGNING YOUR BODY



*Virginia C., a forty-eight-year-old resident of New York City, was concerned with the way her body was changing. She noticed that her posture had deteriorated; her joints often ached and the flexibility and freedom of movement she used to enjoy had disappeared. Her doctor told her that these problems were unavoidable aspects of getting older. However, by using Relaxercise, Virginia was able to restore her posture, regain almost all of her flexibility, and enjoy a renewed sense of youthful vitality.*

"Aligning Your Body" will improve one of your spine's most important movements—bending *sideways*. Every day your spine bends to the left and right, thousands of times. Even when you are sitting in a chair and your body is relatively inactive, your spine makes countless slight bending movements as you change your position, reach for a pen, use the telephone, and so on.

Bending sideways is a surprisingly complex movement. Each time you bend to the right, for example, the right side of your body becomes a little shorter, the left side of your body becomes a little longer, and your body must work to maintain its balance.

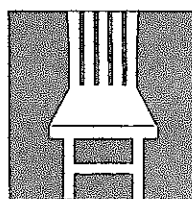
Your spine's ability to bend sideways can become limited without your even realizing it. When this happens, the muscular and skeletal alignment of your body suffers. The muscles along one side of your neck, chest, and back become chronically tense and are often painfully stiff. Over time, asymmetrical alignment can become a postural habit, which makes you especially susceptible to muscle and joint discomfort and neck and low back pain. With poor alignment, even simple movements involve more muscular exertion and stress than is really necessary.

"Aligning Your Body" will improve your alignment, flexibility, and ease of movement. When your body is properly aligned, your neck and lower back will be instantly relieved and more comfortable, and you will enjoy greater freedom of movement.

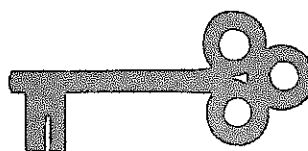
---

# ALIGNING YOUR BODY

---



You will need a hard or firmly cushioned chair or seat.

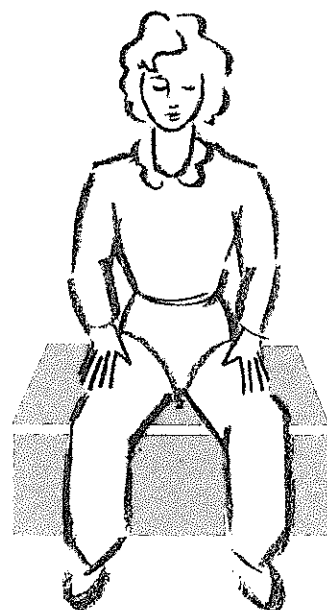


Use the Relaxercise Keys

- Go slowly.
- Make each movement small and easy.
- Relax as much as you can.
- Rest briefly after each movement.

## STARTING POSITION

Sit on the forward edge of your chair or seat and rest your hands on your thighs. Rest your feet flat on the floor, shoulder width apart, directly below your knees.



*repeat each movement 4 to 8 times*

1



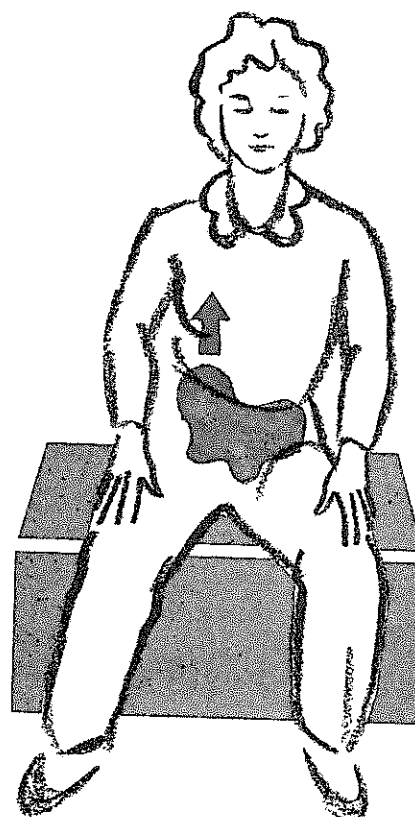
Very slowly tilt your head toward your right shoulder a little. Then return to the starting position and relax.

- Tilt your head to the right, **without** turning it. Continue facing forward as you tilt your head.
- Make each movement very small and easy.
- Relax your neck, shoulders, and chest.
- Don't stretch or strain. Your flexibility will increase all by itself.
- Notice how as you tilt your head to the right, the ribs on your right side move closer together.
- Exhale as you do each movement.

2

Lift the weight of your right buttock slightly. Simply transfer your weight onto your left buttock so you can easily lift the weight of your right buttock. Then return to the starting position and rest.

- This is a very slight movement. Your right buttock does **not** need to lift off the seat.
- Make each movement slow and small.
- Notice how as you lift your right buttock, your right foot presses the floor gently.
- Relax your right leg, shoulder, and stomach.
- Notice that when you lift your right buttock, the ribs on your right side move closer together and your head tilts a little to the right.



*pause to rest after each movement*

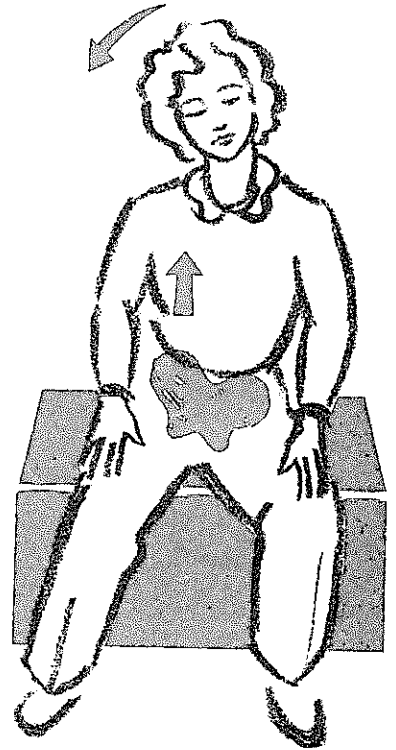


## *rest after each movement*

3

Simultaneously, tilt your head toward your right shoulder while lifting the weight of your right buttock slightly. Then return to the starting position and rest.

- Make each movement smooth and continuous.
- Notice that your right ear and right hip move toward each other, while your left ear and left hip move farther apart.
- Your spine is bending like a letter C.



4



Again, tilt your head toward your right shoulder a few times. Return to the starting position between each movement.

Notice how the right side of your neck and chest are already more flexible and relaxed.



And now, rest for a moment.

- Does the right side of your neck and back feel a little longer and more relaxed than the left side?
- Is more of your weight on your right buttock and sitting bone?

*repeat each movement 4 to 8 times*

*go slowly—your flexibility will increase*

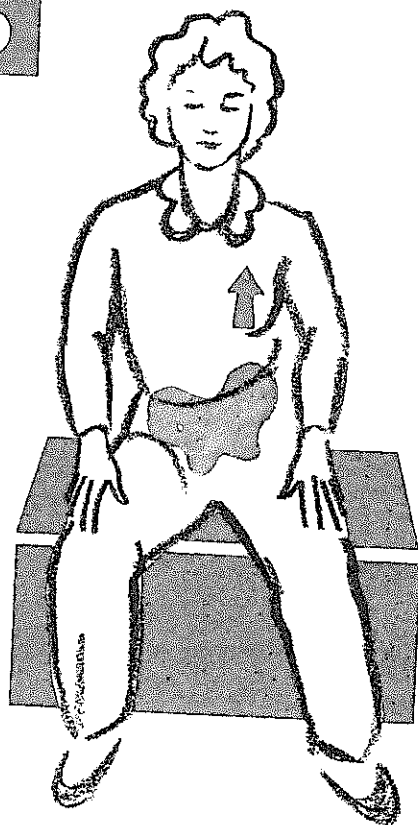
5

Very slowly tilt your head toward your left shoulder. Then return to the starting position and rest.

- Don't turn your head. Just **tilt** your head while facing forward.
- Make this movement slight and comfortable. Don't stretch or strain.
- Notice how as you tilt your head to the left, the ribs on your left side move closer together.
- As you tilt your head, do you feel your weight beginning to shift toward your right buttock?
- Exhale as you do each movement.



6



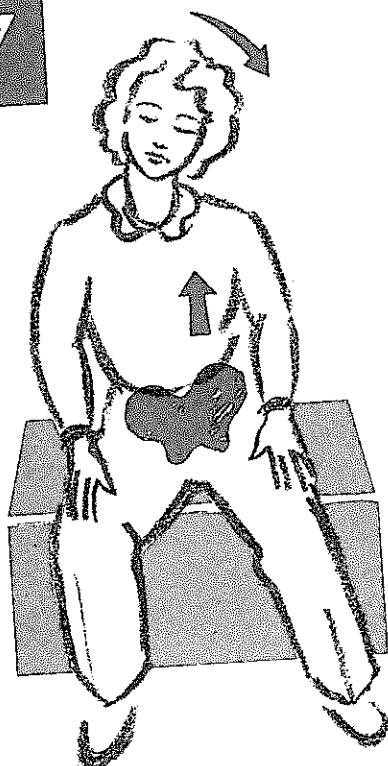
Very slowly lift the weight of your left buttock slightly. Simply transfer your weight to your right buttock so you can easily lift the weight of your left buttock a little. Then return to the starting position and relax.

- This is a small, easy movement. Your left buttock does **not** need to lift off the seat.
- Use as little muscular effort as possible.
- Notice how as you lift your left buttock, your left foot presses against the floor gently and your head and chest bend a little to the left.
- Feel your weight shift from your left buttock to your right buttock.

*relax your neck, back, stomach and legs*

*exhale with each movement*

7



Simultaneously, tilt your head toward your left shoulder while lifting the weight of your left buttock very slightly. Then return to the starting position and relax.

- Use as little effort as possible, so your spine and chest can move freely.
- Relax your neck, arms, shoulders, chest, lower back, and legs.
- Notice that your left ear and left hip are moving toward each other, while your right ear and right hip are moving farther apart.
- Your spine is bending like a letter C.

8

Again, tilt your head toward your left shoulder. Then return to the starting position.

- Notice how your flexibility and ease of movement have already increased.



And now, rest.

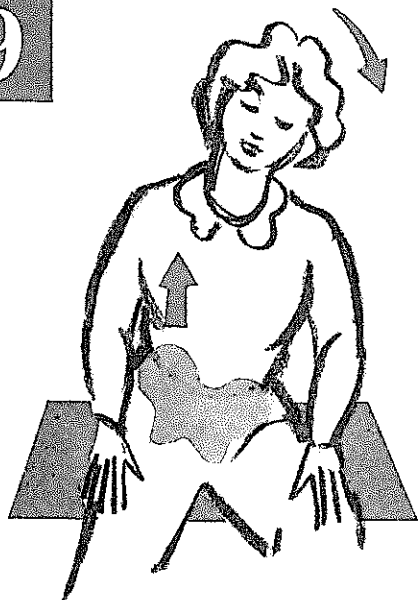
- Feel the left side of your neck and lower back becoming more relaxed.
- Notice that your weight is more evenly distributed between both of your pelvic sitting bones. When your weight is equally distributed, the muscular stress of sitting for long periods of time is significantly reduced.

*use as little effort as possible*



*go slowly so your muscles can relax*

9



Simultaneously, tilt your head toward your left shoulder while lifting the weight of your right buttock very slightly. Then return to the starting position and rest.

- Go slowly.
- Breathe freely.
- Your spine is making a shape like a letter S.

10

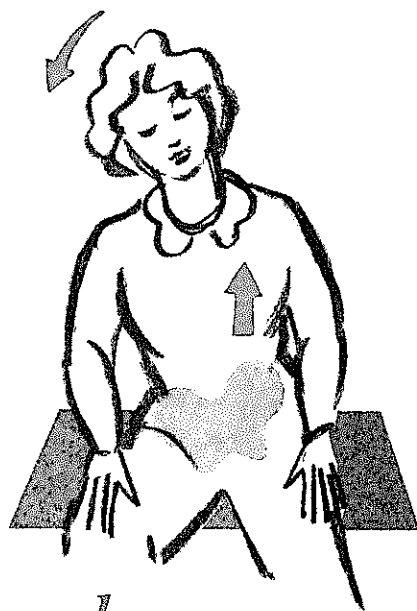
Simply tilt your head to the right. Then return to the starting position.

- Feel your entire body bending to the right.
- Feel how your right hip is lifting.
- Has your flexibility improved even more?

11

Simultaneously, tilt your head to the right while lifting the weight of your left buttock very slightly. Then return to the starting position and rest.

- Breathe freely.
- Your spine is making a shape like a letter S:



*make each movement slight and easy*

*make each movement as easy as possible*

12



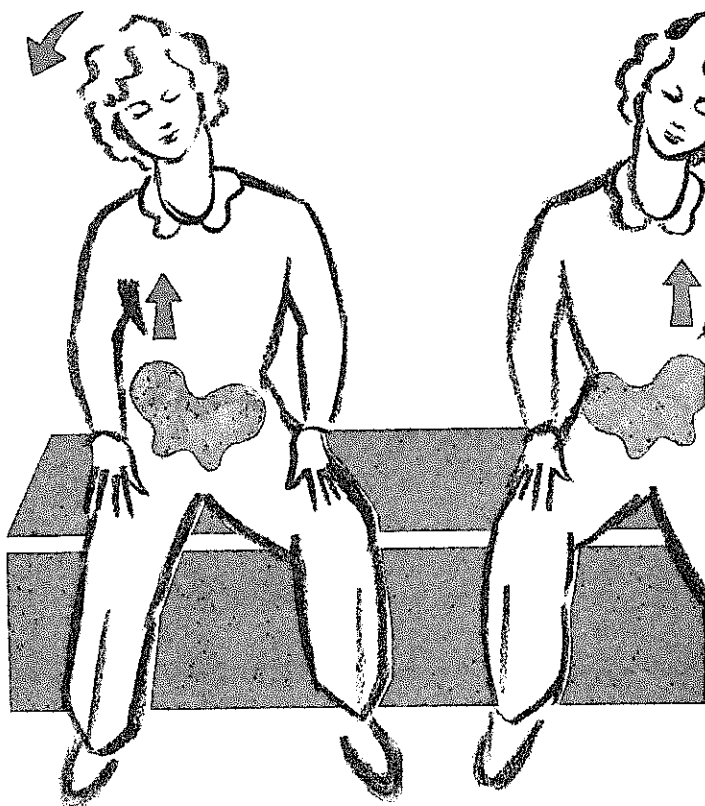
Simply tilt your head to the left.

- Feel how your neck, chest, and back are bending more easily!
- Feel the improvement!

13

Simultaneously, tilt your right ear toward your right shoulder, while lifting your right buttock very slightly. Then return—but move *through* the starting position without stopping—tilt your left ear toward your left shoulder, while lifting your left buttock.

- Alternate 4 to 8 times.
- Make each movement smooth and continuous.
- Go slowly, so each movement can be more relaxed.
- Does your body bend more easily to the left or to the right?
- Relax your neck, shoulders, chest, and lower back so both sides can bend more freely.
- Notice how your weight shifts from side to side.



*pause to rest after every few movements*

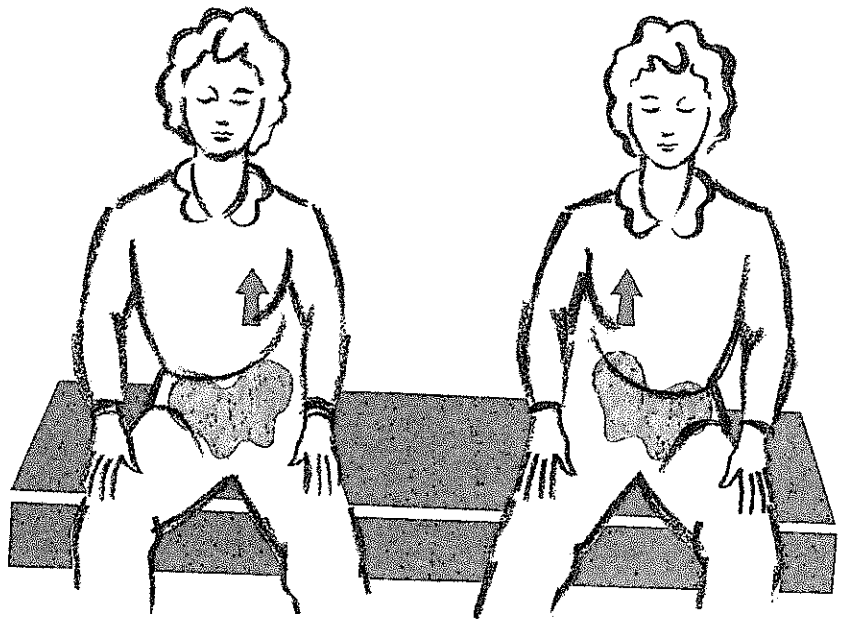


*make each movement slow and comfortable*

**14**

Keep your head and eyes facing forward, and continue alternately lifting your right and left buttocks.

- Rock your pelvis from side to side, without tilting your neck and head.
- Relax your legs, stomach, and shoulders.
- Feel your lower spine bending.



**15**

Measure your improvement: Tilt your head to the right and left a few times.

- Feel how your flexibility has increased!
- Feel the difference!



And now, rest.

Notice that your weight is now evenly balanced between your right and left pelvic sitting bones, and your sitting posture has improved. This will protect your neck and back from stress and strain.

You have completed "**Aligning Your Body.**" When you stand up and walk around, notice the difference in your posture and ease of movement!

*Enjoy your improvement!*