



Allied Wellness

# Thoracic Mobility

## What is the Thoracic Spine?

Our spine is comprised of 5 main segments (33 interlocking bones known as vertebra), each having a specific function and a role to play in our daily life! There is often more emphasis on the Lumbar Spine “low back” and our Cervical Spine “the neck”, but an often-overlooked segment is our Thoracic Spine!

The Thoracic Spine (your “upper back”) is comprised of 12 vertebrae located between the cervical and lumbar spine. Its main function is to protect both your heart and lungs by attaching to your ribcages, but this is not its only role! The thoracic spine is made for MOBILITY by flexion, rotation, and extension! While there is only about 13% of the population that specifically report thoracic pain annually, the lack of mobility in the thoracic spine is now more commonly recognized as contributing factor to several other conditions and related pain.



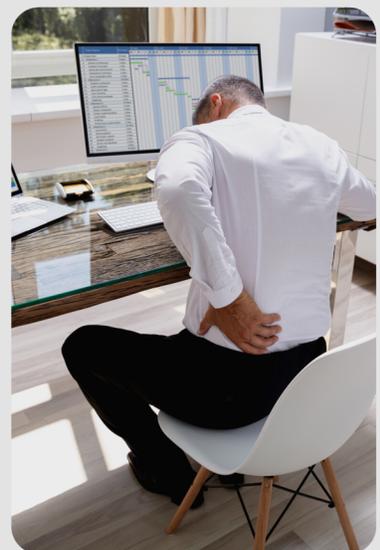
## Thoracic Spine Mobility Benefits

- Decreased neck, should, and low back pain
- Increased lung volume/improved breathing efficiency
- Improved posture
- Improved shoulder stability and mobility



## Sitting and Your Thoracic Spine

Because our “T-Spine” is meant to be mobile, often there's a decrease in movement in this region related to sedentary positions often seen with prolonged sitting. Seen frequently with desk jobs or occupations requiring a person to be frequently bent/bending forward. Recent studies have shown a correlation between prolonged sitting (greater than 8 hours/day) and decreased thoracic mobility resulting in an increased prevalence of neck, shoulder, and/or low back pain. Addressing ways to improve mid back mobility can combat the effects associated with static sitting positions and ultimately reduce pain and improve posture!



# Exercises to Improve Thoracic Mobility

## THORACIC EXTENSION - ELBOWS ON CHAIR

Kneel on a pillow in front of a chair or low table. Hold a wand, cane or golf club in both hands with palms face up. Place your elbows on the chair with elbows bent.

Next, lean back bringing your buttocks towards your feet as you allow your hips to flex and spine to extend for a gentle stretch to the upper back.

Return to starting position and repeat.  
Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 10X for 2 round.



## SIDE LYING TRUNK ROTATION

While lying on your side with your arms out-stretched in front of your body, slowly twist your upper body to the side and rotated your spine. Your arms and head should also be rotating along with the spine as shown. Follow your head with your hand.

Perform slowly throughout movement  
Repeat 10X for 2 rounds each side.

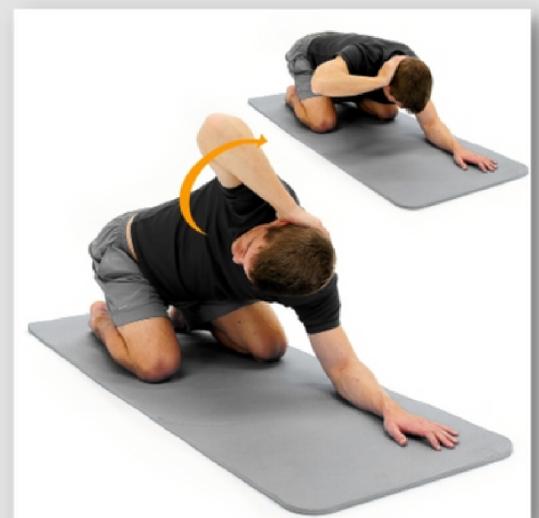


## THORACIC ROTATION - QUADRUPED

While in a crawl position, lower your buttock a little towards your feet to get in a lower position as shown.

Next, with a hand behind your head, rotate your body and your head to the side, then return.

Perform slowly throughout movement  
Repeat 10X for 2 rounds each side.



# Sources

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