

## Cat Stretch 1

Level 1 Difficulty

**Benefits:** Strengthens & loosens shoulders; loosens upper back & lower back, hamstrings, inner thighs.

**Time to Do:** 1 - 3 minutes

**Body Parts Used by This**

**Posture:** Arms, Shoulders, Upper Back, Lower Back

**Warms You Up for:** Puppy; Child Pose; any pose that works the shoulders or inner thighs.

**Builds you up for:** Cat Stretch 2, Sun Salutation

**Combines Well with:** Puppy, Child Pose

**Energy Center Used:** Heart & Solar Plexus (a little)



This is a nice, gentle stretch. It's a good warm up to your routine, a nice start to the day, it works the knots out of your body any time you have a minute. Once you get used to this pose, you can use it to connect movement and breathing. That will help you make the mind-body connection that yoga is so famous for and help you stay stress free.

### Start in Table Stance

Kneel on all fours

Arms coming straight down from the shoulders.

Knees coming straight down from the hips.



### Next

Lower your chest toward your knees.



**Tip** This is done by bending the elbows and lowering yourself down and back, like a push up.

**Tip** Think of it as pushing your body back and down.

Allow your hips to tilt up and back.

## Cat Stretch 1 (continued)

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### Next

Sweep chest along the floor.

When your head is in line with your hands – push up and arch your back.



### Next

Breathe out, lower your chest to your knees again and repeat the routine.



**Repeat** 5 – 10 times (or as much as you'd like!)

### About the Hold and the Release

There is no hold or release, as such. Do this in a continuous motion in rhythm with your breathing.

Breathing out you bring your chest down.

Breathing in you're sweeping the floor and arching up.

### You Will Feel This In

Your upper back, middle back, lower back, shoulders. Some people also feel it in their inner thighs.

### Final Release

Arch up, inhale

Exhale and let your weight drop down to your hands and knees again.

### Follow Up

Try following this with the Puppy and the Child Pose for a gentle, mini-routine.

## Cat Stretch 1 (continued)

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### Common Errors

- Not separating legs to shoulder width apart.
  - Not pushing chest back as far as possible toward knees.
  - Pushing up before head is in line with hands.
  - Letting head flop.
  - Rushing the breathing. Breathe in slowly, gently. Let the out- breath be long and slow.  
Remember to pause in between inhaling or exhaling.
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### Breathing



#### Start

Breathe in

Breathe out, allowing weight to settle onto hands & knees

Breathe in

Now, do the following steps in continuous motion:



**Breathing out**



**Breathing in**



**Still Breathing in**



**Breathing out**



**Breathing in**



**Still Breathing in etc...**

**Final Release** After you arch up & inhale  
Exhale and let your weight drop down to your hands and knees again.