



# STRETCHING YOUR BODY TO SUPPORT FERTILITY and GET EMOTIONAL and PHYSICAL BENEFITS

**Posture is a reflection of your physical health, vitality and emotional state.**

Stress causes us to tense up and suffer from fatigue without even realising it.

If you tend to slump forward, it may be due to sluggish internal organs (which get bent) or it may be have to do with poor self esteem.

*Poor posture will eventually become chronic and weaken your postural muscles, leading to compression of the organs which won't be able to function properly.*

The good news is that **all physical reactions to emotional stress can be controlled both by your mind and by moving your body.** The key factor is to learn how to react to everyday stresses and get in control of these reactions. By learning to improve your physical and “emotional” posture, you can influence greatly your response to stress, thus reducing physical discomfort.

Become aware of your weaknesses, be thankful to them and see them as guidelines for behaviour, not as things to feel bad about. If we are able to look at them in this way, they may point us in a better direction and teach us how to take better care of ourselves.

**These stretches will help you to connect with yourself, thus improving your posture!** The aim of these exercises is to help you bringing awareness of where in your body you hold tension, rather than grabbing your toes.

## **- When should you perform these stretches?**

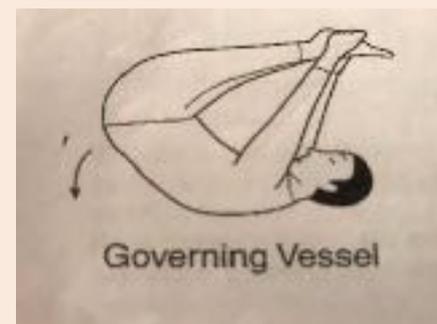
It would be best to find some time both in the morning and the evening, but start with what you can. Stretching in the morning will let you draw the rising energy of nature, while stretching in the evening may help you to get rid of fatigue and energy accumulated during the day. Avoid stretching after a meal or if you have fever.

## **- How to breath?**

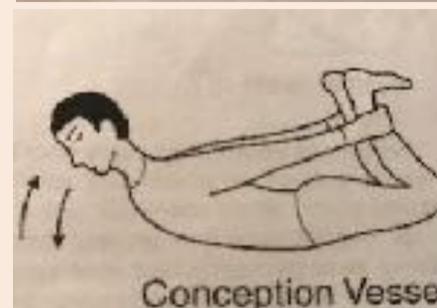
Never force a stretch, but move slowly into it, using your breath as a guiding help. When inhaling try to lengthen a bit more, when exhaling relax into the stretch.

- Spend more time doing the stretches that you feel most challenged

1) **Governing Vessel:** Lie on your back and try to take hold of the soles of your feet. Rock back and forth, rolling on your spine. All the effort should come from the lower abdomen and avoid rolling on your neck.



2) **Conception Vessel:** Lie on your stomach and try to take hold of your ankles. If you can't reach them, imagine that you do. Rock back and forth, rolling on your abdomen gently. Avoid this exercise if you suffer from back problems or during a menstrual period.



3) **Penetrating Vessel:** Sit and try to place one foot on the opposite thigh. Breathe into your belly and on the out breath stretch forward toward the extended foot. It is more important to keep your back straight rather than reaching your foot. Repeat for 5 breath on each side.



4) **Belt Vessel:** Sit with your legs apart, placing one hand on your hip and the other on your ribcage. As you inhale, lean towards the side where you are holding your hip. Repeat it 5 times for each side. Then grab both your hips and make 30 circles, first clockwise, then anticlockwise, moving from the base of your spine.



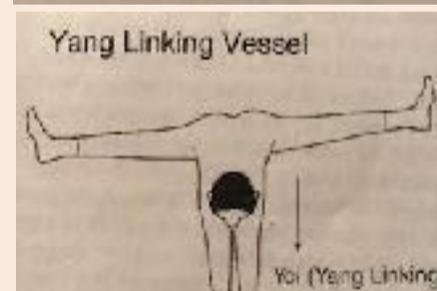
5) **Yang heel Vessel:** Sit with your legs apart and try to take hold of the big toes. If you can't reach them, imagine you do. As you inhale, lift only one leg, stretching it outwards and following it with your eyes. As you exhale, return it to the centre. Repeat this for 5 breath for each leg.



6) **Yin heel Vessel:** Try to kneel with one leg straight in front of you. Keep your back straight and if you can, stretch toward the extended foot. If you are very flexible, you could try holding your foot and raise it slowly as you inhale. Repeat for 5 breath on each side.



7) **Yang linking Vessel:** Open your legs as wide as possible. Place your hands on the floor in front of you. As you inhale, lengthen towards the floor; as you exhale, return upright. Keep your back straight and let it follow your hands where it is comfortable.



8) **Yin linking Vessel:** Sit and try to fold your foot on the opposite thigh. If you are flexible, try to take hold of your big toe, reaching it from behind your back. Always keep your spine straight. You can also try to grab the big toe of the extended foot. This is quite a difficult posture, so if you can't grab any big toes, it doesn't matter; just use your imagination and breath gently into it. Repeat for 5 breath on each side.

