

The Best Lower Back Stretch

The most popular way to stretch your lower back is by bending over and touching your toes. But I've always hated this stretch. While my lower back feels better in the moment, it feels worse after. So I avoid it.

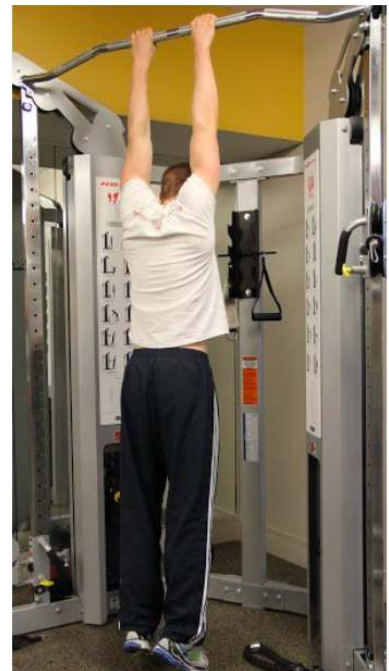
One day I was watching videos of Russian Weight Lifters. They were stretching post-workout, and hanging on a pull-up bar for time. I found that interesting so I tried it next workout. My lower back felt great!

It turns out that some doctors use “spinal decompression therapy” to treat lower back pain. You lie upside down on an inversion table. Gravity then stretches and “decompresses” your spine without bending it.

Hanging on a pull-up bar stretches your back the same way. But it also stretches your shoulders while strengthening your grip. And you can do it at home, several times a week, for free!

Here's how it works:

1. Hang on a pull-up bar, with your palms facing away. The bar should be high so your feet can't touch the floor.
2. Hang with straight legs, for as long as your grip can hold.
3. Relax your torso/shoulders, let it stretch



That's it. I'll do 3-4 sets of 30 seconds at the end of my workout, several times a week. You can hold longer if you use a full grip and chalk. I never use straps for this exercise, but you could if you wanted.

Stretching is often the first thing people want to do for back pain. Yet from my lifting and coaching experience, stretching rarely fixes anything. Toe-touches in particular just seem to make it worse. So if someone insists on stretching, I'll suggest spinal decompressions instead. Try it.