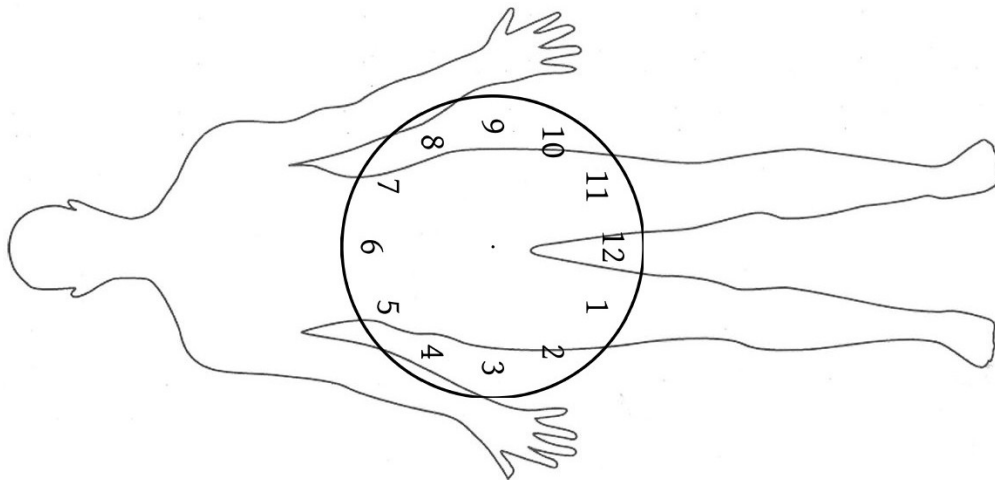


Pelvic Clock

The Pelvic Clock allows you to release and regain control of the muscles in the core of the body that hold and move the pelvis. The Pelvic Clock involves lying on the back with the knees bent and gently rolling the pelvis forward, backward, and in circles. This exercise helps to relieve lower back pain, lordosis, lateral pelvic tilt, pelvic torsion, and pelvic rotation.

EXERCISE DESCRIPTION

Starting Position: Lie on your back with your knees bent up and pointing toward the ceiling, and your knees and feet a comfortable hip width distance apart. Imagine a clock on the floor underneath your pelvis (see image below).



Movement: Your neutral starting position is the center of your clock. Roll your pelvis forward, arching your lower back. Where your tailbone is pressing down into the floor now is 12 o'clock on your clock. Slowly release and come back to neutral. Now flatten your lower back. This position is 6 o'clock. Do several gentle arches and flattens, going back and forth from 12 to 6 on your clock.

Tracing the right side of your clock: Gently arch to 12 o'clock, then slowly and gently roll your pelvis to 3 o'clock, tracing the outer circle of your clock to the right, so that you're gently pressing down at 3 o'clock. Then go back and forth between 3 o'clock and 12 o'clock a few times, tracing the outer circle of your clock. Then relax back to center.

Flatten to your 6 o'clock position. Then trace the outer circle of your clock to the right to go to the 3 o'clock position again. Go back and forth from 3 o'clock to 6 o'clock a few times, smoothly tracing the outer circle of your clock. Then relax back to center.

Now arch to 12 o'clock. Then trace the outer circle of your clock to the right, moving through 3 o'clock to 6 o'clock, then coming back through 3 o'clock to 12 o'clock. Go back and forth like this a few times between 12 and 6 o'clock. Then relax back to center.

Tracing the left side of your clock: Arch to 12 o'clock, and then roll your pelvis to 9 o'clock, tracing the outer circle of your clock to the left, so that you're gently pressing down at 9 o'clock. Go back and forth between 9 o'clock and 12 o'clock a few times, smoothly tracing the outer circle of your clock. Then relax back to center.

Flatten to your 6 o'clock position. From here, trace the outer circle of your clock to go to the 9 o'clock position. Go back and forth from 9 o'clock to 6 o'clock a few times, smoothly tracing the outer circle of your clock. Then relax back to center.

Now arch to 12 o'clock. Trace the outer circle of your clock to the left, smoothly moving through 9 o'clock to 6 o'clock, then coming back through 9 o'clock to 12 o'clock. Go back and forth like this a few times between 12 and 6 o'clock. Then relax back to center.

Full circles: Start by arching to 12 o'clock. Trace the outer circle of your clock to the right to 3 o'clock, then to 6 o'clock, then to 9 o'clock, then to 12 o'clock, moving slowly and smoothly. Then do two more circles in this clockwise direction. When you're done, come back to center and rest.

Now you can do counterclockwise circles. Start by arching to 12 o'clock. Then trace the outer circle of your clock to the left to 9 o'clock, then to 6 o'clock, then to 3 o'clock, then to 12 o'clock, moving slowly and smoothly. Then do two more circles in this counterclockwise direction. When you're done, come back to center and rest.

ANATOMY OF THE PELVIC CLOCK

See "Anatomy of the Arch & Flatten," CEI Level 1, Section 1.

Breathing in the Pelvic Clock: When teaching this movement, my advice is to not give any direction regarding the breathing. Simply tell your student that they should maintain relaxed, natural breathing as they do the exercise, and not hold their breath. This exercise demands a lot of conscious focus and coordination, and attempting to inhale and exhale at certain times will likely overwhelm the student, at least when they're first learning it.

CONDITIONS HELPED BY THE PELVIC CLOCK

The Pelvic Clock directly addresses the following conditions by releasing involuntary muscle contraction in the lower back and abdominals, and alleviating compression of the lumbar vertebrae.

- Muscle tightness in the lower back and abdominals
- Lower back pain
- Disc problems in the lumbar spine
- Sciatica
- Hyperlordosis
- Sway back posture
- Flat lower back (tucking pelvis under)
- Functional leg length discrepancy/lateral pelvic tilt
- Pelvic torsion
- Pelvic rotation

HOW TO TEACH THE PELVIC CLOCK

Get the student in their starting position. Instruct your student to lie on their back with their knees bent and feet on the floor. Their knees and feet should be a comfortable hip width distance apart. The student can rest their arms on the floor by their sides.

Invite the student to close their eyes. Closing their eyes removes all the visual information that their brain would otherwise have to process. Keeping the eyes closed allows the student to focus completely on their internal sensations.

Movement: First, ask your student to imagine a clock on the floor underneath their pelvis. You'll talk them through establishing where their clock is:

Their neutral resting position is the center of their clock. Tell them to do a gentle arch, rolling their pelvis forward: now they are at 12 o'clock. Now tell them to do a gentle flatten: their flattened position is 6 o'clock. Tell your student to do several gentle arches and flattens, going back and forth from 12 to 6.

Tracing the right side of the clock: Instruct your student to gently arch to 12 o'clock, then slowly and gently roll their pelvis to 3 o'clock, tracing the outer circle of their clock to the right, so that they're gently pressing down at 3 o'clock. Then instruct your student to go back and forth between 3 o'clock and 12 o'clock a few times, tracing the outer circle of their clock. Then they can relax back to center.

Now instruct your student to flatten their back to the 6 o'clock position. Then tell them

to trace the outer circle of their clock to the right to go to their 3 o'clock position again. Instruct your student to go back and forth from 3 o'clock to 6 o'clock a few times, smoothly tracing the outer circle of their clock. Then they can relax back to center.

Now instruct your student to arch to their 12 o'clock position. Then tell them to trace the outer circle of their clock to the right, moving through 3 o'clock to 6 o'clock, then coming back through 3 o'clock to 12 o'clock. Tell them to back and forth like this a few times between 12 and 6 o'clock. Then they can relax back to center.

Tracing the left side of the clock: Instruct your student to arch to 12 o'clock, and then roll their pelvis to 9 o'clock, tracing the outer circle of their clock to the left, so that they're gently pressing down at 9 o'clock. Tell them to back and forth between 9 o'clock and 12 o'clock a few times, smoothly tracing the outer circle of their clock. Then they can relax back to center.

Now instruct your student to flatten their back to their 6 o'clock position. Then tell them to trace the outer circle of their clock to go to the 9 o'clock position. Tell them to go back and forth from 9 o'clock to 6 o'clock a few times, smoothly tracing the outer circle of their clock. Then they can relax back to center.

Now tell your student to arch to their 12 o'clock position. Then tell them to trace the outer circle of their clock to the left, smoothly moving through 9 o'clock to 6 o'clock, then coming back through 9 o'clock to 12 o'clock. Tell them to go back and forth like this a few times between 12 and 6 o'clock. Then they can relax back to center.

Full circles: Tell your student to start by arching to their 12 o'clock position. Tell them to trace the outer circle of their clock to the right to 3 o'clock, then to 6 o'clock, then to 9 o'clock, then to 12 o'clock. Tell them to do two more circles in this clockwise direction. When they're done, they can come back to center and rest.

Now talk your student through counterclockwise circles. Tell them to start by arching to their 12 o'clock position. Tell them to trace the outer circle of their clock to the left to 9 o'clock, then to 6 o'clock, then to 3 o'clock, then to 12 o'clock. Tell them to do two more circles in this counterclockwise direction. When they're done, they can come back to center and rest.

Notes:

This is an advanced exercise. It is fun to teach in a group class to students who are very comfortable with the basic exercises. It can also be taught to private clients who are comfortable with the basic exercises.

Common mistakes:

Please make sure your student does not hold their breath; remind them to breathe as they need to throughout the exercise.

When movements are difficult to coordinate, students will tend to rush through in order to avoid having to figure out how to coordinate the movement. Watch your student closely to make sure they are moving very slowly, taking the time to figure out how to trace the outer circle of their clock completely without jumping around.

The student's knees will move side to side as they move to 3 o'clock and 9 o'clock. However, the knees are only moving as a result of the pelvis moving. The student should focus on the movement of their pelvis, and their knees will just go along for the ride; the student should not intentionally move their knees.

The following is an example of how I teach the Pelvic Clock:

Gently come down to the floor, and lie down on your back on your carpet or exercise mat. Come into your neutral starting position, with your knees bent and feet on the floor, a comfortable hip width distance apart. Get comfortable here, so that you feel like you're using little to no effort to stay in this position.

Imagine a clock on the floor underneath your pelvis. This resting place, where you are right now, is the center of the clock. Now, roll your pelvis forward, doing a gentle arch with your lower back. Where your tailbone is gently pressing down into the floor now is 12 o'clock. Now, slowly and gently relax back to center.

Now, gently flatten your back. This position is 6 o'clock on your clock. Slowly and gently go back and forth a few times from 6 o'clock to 12 o'clock, visualizing your clock and getting a sense of how big it is. After you've gone back and forth a few times, come back to the center of your clock and rest.

Now, gently arch to 12 o'clock, and now very slowly and gently roll your pelvis to 3 o'clock, tracing the outside of your clock to the right in a circular motion, so that you're gently pressing down at 3 o'clock. Now, slowly and gently, go back and forth between 3 o'clock and 12 o'clock a few times, tracing the outside circle of your clock. After you've gone back and forth a few times, relax back to center.

Now, gently flatten to your 6 o'clock position. From here, trace the outside of your clock to go to the 3 o'clock position again. Slowly and gently, go back and forth from 3 o'clock to 6 o'clock a few times, smoothly tracing the outer circle of your clock. When you're done, relax back to center.

So now you've practiced tracing two quarters of your clock - from 12 to 3, and from 6 to 3. We'll put those together and you'll trace the whole right half of your clock, between 12 and 6. Start by doing a gentle arch, going to 12 o'clock. Now slowly and gently trace the outer circle of your clock, smoothly moving through 3 o'clock to 6 o'clock, then coming back through 3 o'clock to 12 o'clock. Go back and forth like this a few times between 12 and 6 o'clock. Then, when you're done, relax back to center. Stretch out your legs if you want to, and notice any new sensations in your back. Feel free to move in any way that you need to while you rest before the next movement.

Now you can come back to your neutral starting place again, with knees bent and feet on the floor, a comfortable hip width distance apart. Gently arch to 12 o'clock, and now very slowly and gently roll your pelvis to 9 o'clock, tracing the outside of your clock to the left in a circular motion, so that you're gently pressing down at 9 o'clock. Slowly and gently, go back and forth between 9 o'clock and 12 o'clock a few times, smoothly tracing the outer circle of your clock. After you've gone back and forth a few times, relax back to center.

Now, gently flatten to your 6 o'clock position. From here, trace the outside of your clock to go to the 9 o'clock position. Slowly and gently, go back and forth from 9 o'clock to 6 o'clock a few times, smoothly tracing the outer circle of your clock. When you're done, relax back to center.

So now you've practiced tracing the other two quarters of your clock - from 12 to 9, and from 6 to 9. We'll put those together and you'll trace the whole left half of your clock. Start by doing a gentle arch, going to 12 o'clock. Now slowly and gently trace the outer circle of your clock, smoothly moving through 9 o'clock to 6 o'clock, then coming back through 9 o'clock to 12 o'clock. Go back and forth like this a few times between 12 and 6 o'clock. Then, when you're done, relax back to center. Stretch out your legs if you want to, and notice any new sensations in your back. Feel free to move in any way that you need to while you rest before the next movement.

Come back to your neutral starting position. Now you're going to do full circles with your clock. Go ahead and gently arch to 12 o'clock. Let's start going clockwise. So from here, slowly and smoothly move to the right to 3 o'clock, then to 6 o'clock, then to 9 o'clock, then to 12 o'clock. Continue doing circles in this clockwise direction two more times, very slowly and smoothly. When you're done, come back to center and rest.

Now you can do counterclockwise circles. Start by gently arching to 12 o'clock. Then slowly and smoothly move to the left to 9 o'clock, then to 6 o'clock, then to 3 o'clock, then to 12 o'clock. Continue doing circles in this counterclockwise direction two more times, very slowly and smoothly. When you're done, come back to center and rest.