

This Month's Focus: Backs

1. Little Swims. Students should lie on their tummies with their arms and legs stretched long. Raise the arms and legs just slightly off the floor. The head should be raised as well but still facing the floor, not the hands. Alternate the arms and legs going up and down like a little swimming motion. Do 20 to 40 little swims total. (Note: These should be quick, small movements to warm up the backs and bodies.)

2. Ball Lifts. Students should lie on their tummies with their arms bent so their hands are under their foreheads, resting on the floor. Their legs should be straight and feet pointed in a turned out 1st position. They should hold a small exercise ball (4-6 inches in diameter) between their knees. Lift and lower the ball with their legs 8x slowly. Move the exercise ball to be between their heels. Lift and lower the ball, keeping the knees straight, 8x more quickly.

3. Back-Ups. Students lie on their tummies with their arms bent so their hands are under their foreheads, resting on the floor. Their legs should be straight and feet pointed in a turned out 1st position. Do 8 slow reverse crunches (so the back comes up).

4. Cat Cow Stretch + Child's Pose. Students begin on their hands and knees. Go through cat and cow poses for a total of 8 sets. (Cat then cow is one set.) Sit back to child's pose.

5. Arabesque Band Work. Students should tie a Theraband around one foot and stand on the other end of the band with the other foot while standing in 1st position, facing the barre. Tendu the leg with the Theraband tied around the foot to the back. Lift the leg in arabesque. At this point, the Theraband should be taut, but the student should be able to lift to a higher arabesque with some resistance from the band. Do 4 to 8 pulses (little lifts) in arabesque. Close. Switch legs.