

## Thoracic Towel Stretch

Poor posture, forward head posture, upper crossed syndrome all can cause a rounded upper back or postural kyphosis. We want to stretch and relax the muscles to promote the thoracic region to be in better alignment in the spine.

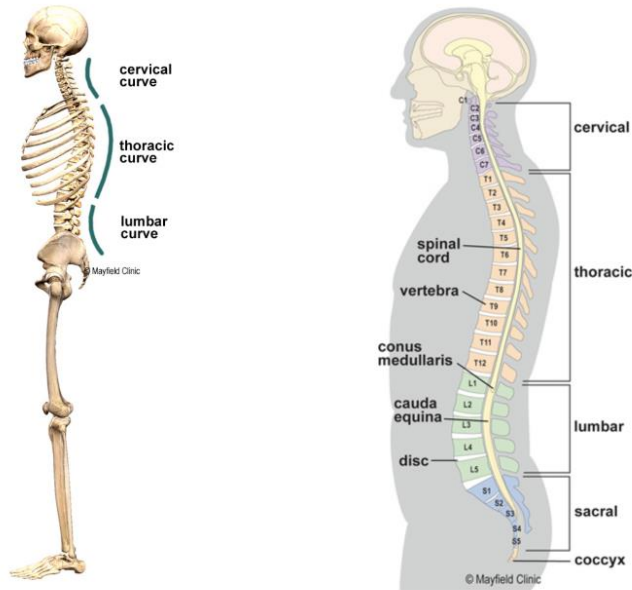


Figure 1: <https://www.pilatescollectivedenver.com/blog/curves-of-the-spine>

- Roll up a towel. You could also use a rolled-up mat, pool noodle cut small or foam roller.
- Lay on your bed or ground. If needed, use a pillow to support for your head.
- Place the roll vertically under (parallel to) your thoracic spine: mid back up.
- Lay back onto it. Place your arms out like a 'T' or bend at the elbows and let your hands drop above your head. Have your feet on the ground with knees bent. Relax for 1 minute, take some deep breaths.
- There may be some discomfort in the beginning, it should feel better as you do it. If there is pain, stop and let me know.

We are trying to get mobility and a stretch in the thoracic spine which can be flexed from the forward head posture. You can also stretch the pecs in this position too.



Figure 2: <https://qrangerchiro.com.au/news/posture-and-stress>

You can also place the roll **horizontally under (perpendicular to)**, which will target the vertebrae more in the thoracic spine. Place it in the mid back region, place your arms out like a 'T' or bend at the elbows and let your hands drop above your head. Have your feet on the ground with knees bent. Relax for 1 minute, take some deep breaths, then readjust the roll. Now move the roll up along the spine and repeat.



Figure 3: <https://yogainternational.com/article/view/yoga-for-kyphosis1/>

### To increase the stretch, try:

- Laying on a harder surface: Bed → mat → hard ground.
- Try a firmer or larger (higher) roll to lay on: rolled up towel → rolled up mat → pool noodle → foam roller.
- Try placing your arms in different positions: arms by side → 'T' → elbows bent with hands above your head → arms straight up above your head.
- Relax for a longer duration: 1 minute → 2 minutes → 3 minutes.