










Stretch Out!




Stretching gives us more freedom of movement to do the things we need and like to do. Stretching after activity helps prevent injury and soreness and can also improve balance and flexibility (range of movement) for daily tasks, and stress relief.

Stretching Tips:

- Do each stretching exercise of your choice 3 to 5 times.
- Try to target as many muscle groups as possible (arms, legs, back, etc.) for equal flexibility.
- Slowly move into a stretching position as far as you can without feeling pain. Hold each position for 10 to 30 seconds. Relax, then repeat. With each repeat, try to stretch a little farther – your body is gaining flexibility.
- If stretches are the only kind of exercise you are able to do, do them at least 3 times a week.
- Stretch everyday if you are able. It takes little effort (low intensity activity) and your body will thank you for it.

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|  | <p style="text-align: center;">Hamstring Stretch Stretch muscles in the back of the thigh</p> <p>Sit sideways on a hard surface (like a bench or two chairs placed side by side) with one leg stretched out on the hard surface, toes pointing up. Keep the other leg bent with foot flat on the floor. Straighten your back and shoulders.</p> <p>If you feel the stretch, hold for 10 to 30 seconds. If you don't feel a stretch in the leg on the hard surface, lean forward from the hips (not waist) until you do. Repeat with other leg.</p> |
|  | <p style="text-align: center;">Calf Stretch Stretch the calves and lower leg muscles</p> <p>Stand with hands against a wall, arms outstretched and elbows straight (slight bend in elbow). Keep left knee bent and toes of the right foot slightly inward. Step back 1 or 2 steps with the right leg, feet flat on the floor. You should feel a stretch in right calf muscle. If you do not feel a stretch, move your foot farther back until you do. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds. Repeat with left leg.</p> |
|  | <p style="text-align: center;">Ankle Stretch Stretch front ankle muscles</p> <p>Remove shoes. Sit on the edge of a chair and lean back (support the back with a pillow). Stretch legs in front of you. Heels on the floor, bend ankles and point feet toward you (flex your foot), then point feet away from you. If you do not feel the stretch, repeat with feet slightly off the floor. Hold position for 1 second. Repeat.</p> |

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|  | <p style="text-align: center;">Tricep Stretch Stretch muscles in the back of upper arms</p> <p>Hold one end of a towel in your right hand. Raise right arm, draping the towel down your back. Keep your right arm in position and with your left hand reach behind your lower back to grasp the bottom end of the towel. Now grab higher up the towel with your left hand – this pulls your right arm down. Continue until your hands touch or as close as you can.</p> <p>Hold the position for 1 second. Repeat on the other side.</p> |
|  | <p style="text-align: center;">Wrist Stretch Stretch wrist muscles</p> <p>Place hands together in praying position. Slowly lift elbows so arms are parallel to the floor. Keep hands together.</p> <p>Hold position for 10 to 30 seconds. Repeat.</p> |
|  | <p style="text-align: center;">Quadricep Stretch Stretch muscles in the front of the thigh</p> <p>Lie on your side on the floor. Hips should line up so that one is directly on top of the other. Rest head on a pillow or the hand of your arm that is on the floor.</p> <p>Bend the top knee. Reach back and grab the heel of this leg (if you can't reach the heel, loop a belt over the foot and hold the belt ends) gently pull until you feel a stretch in the front of this thigh.</p> <p>Hold position for 10 to 30 seconds. Repeat on other side.</p> |
|  | <p style="text-align: center;">Double Hip Rotation Stretch outer muscles of hips and thighs</p> <p>DO NOT do this exercise if you have had a hip replacement, unless your doctor approves.</p> <p>Lie on your back on the floor with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Keep shoulders on the floor at all times, knees bent and together. Gently lower legs to one side of your body, as far as you can without forcing.</p> <p>Hold for 10 to 30 seconds. Return legs to an upright position. Repeat on the other side.</p> |

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|  | <h3 style="text-align: center;">Single Hip Rotation</h3> <p style="text-align: center;">Stretch muscles of pelvis and inner thigh</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DO NOT do this exercise if you have had a hip replacement, unless your doctor approves.</p> <p>Lie on your back on the floor with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Keep shoulders on the floor the floor at all times. Lower one knee slowly to the side of your body while keeping the other leg and pelvis in place.</p> <p>Hold for 10 to 30 seconds. Slowly bring the knee back to an upright position. Repeat with other knee.</p> |
|  | <h3 style="text-align: center;">Shoulder Rotation</h3> <p style="text-align: center;">Stretch shoulder muscles</p> <p>Lie flat on the floor with legs straight and pillow under your head (if your back bothers you, place a rolled towel under your knees). Shoulders and upper arms should stay flat on the floor. Stretch arms out to the side. Bend elbows so hands point to the ceiling.</p> <p>Let arms slowly roll backwards from the elbow. Stop when you feel the stretch or pain. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.</p> <p>Still bent at the elbow, slowly raise arms back to the ceiling. Let arms slowly roll forward to point toward your hips. Stop when you feel the stretch or pain. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds.</p> <p>Repeat.</p> |
|  | <h3 style="text-align: center;">Neck Rotation</h3> <p style="text-align: center;">Stretch neck muscles</p> <p>Lie on the floor with a phone book or other thick book under your head. Slowly turn head to one side. Hold position for 10 to 30 seconds. Repeat and hold on other side.</p> <p>Head should not tilt forward or backward. You can keep your knees bent to keep your back comfortable during this exercise.</p> |

SAFETY FIRST

- If you have had a hip replacement, check with your doctor before doing lower body exercises.
- If you have had a hip replacement, do not cross your legs or bend your hips past a 90-degree angle.
- Always warm up before stretching exercises (e.g. do some easy walking with arm-pumping first or other endurance or strength exercise). Stretching muscles before they are warmed up may result in injury.
- When stretching, mild discomfort or a pulling sensation is normal, but **stretching should never cause pain**, especially joint pain. If you feel pain, you are stretching too far.
- Never "bounce" or "jerk" into a stretch. Make slow, steady movements instead. Jerking into position can cause muscles to tighten and may result in injury.
- Avoid "locking" your joints into place when you straighten them during stretches. Always have a slight bend in your joints when stretching (e.g. keep a small bend in your knees and elbows).