

Stretching

Why stretch?

- Stretching is useful for both injury prevention and injury treatment.
- If done properly, stretching increases flexibility, this can directly translate into reduced risk of injury. A muscle/tendon group with a greater range of motion will be less likely to experience tears when used actively.
- Stretching is thought to improve recovery and may enhance athletic performance.
- Stretching improves your balance, coordination, and circulation. This increases blood flow to your muscles often speeding the recovery process after muscle injuries.
- Flexible muscles can improve your daily performance in tasks such as lifting and bending.
- Stretching promotes better posture. Frequent stretching keeps your muscles from getting tight, allowing you to maintain proper posture and minimize aches and pains.
- Stretching can relieve stress by relaxing the tense muscles that often accompany stress.
- Stretching before work tasks helps you focus on working safely.

Stretching safely:

- Stretching should be a key part of your exercise program.
- Stretching before physical activity will prepare your body.
- Stretching after your work promotes better range of motion of your joints.
- When stretching:
 - ⇒ Follow the instructions of your medical care provider!
 - ⇒ Stay within your comfort range! Expect to feel some tension when stretching. If you feel pain, you've gone too far.
 - ⇒ Move slowly and support your body.
 - ⇒ Hold each stretch for 10-15 seconds.
 - ⇒ Breathe freely as you hold each stretch; try not to hold your breath.

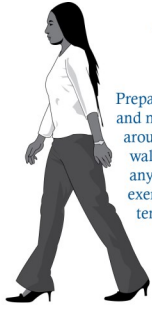
Stretching essentials:

- Target major muscle groups: When you are stretching, focus on your calves, thighs, hips, lower back, neck and shoulders.
 - ⇒ Stretch muscles and joints that you routinely use at work or play.
- Warm up first: Stretching muscles when they are cold increases your risk of injury, including pulled muscles.
 - ⇒ Warm up by walking while gently pumping your arms, or do a favorite exercise at low intensity for five minutes.
 - ⇒ Stretch after you exercise — when your muscles are warm and more receptive to stretching.

- Know how often to stretch: As a general rule, stretch before and after a manual task or exercise.
 - ⇒ If you do not exercise regularly, you might want to stretch at least three times a week to maintain flexibility.
 - ⇒ If you have a problem area, such as tightness in the back of your leg, you might want to stretch every day or even twice a day.
- Know when to exercise caution: If you have a chronic condition or an injury, you may need to alter your approach to stretching.
 - ⇒ If you have a strained muscle, stretching it may cause further harm.
 - ⇒ Discuss the best way to stretch with your medical provider.

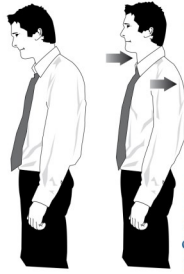
Concluding points for reducing your risk:

- Correct posture alleviates stress on muscles, tendons and nerves.
- Take periodic stretch breaks.
- After work, enjoy activities that use other muscles. Try activities such as swimming and jogging which use different muscles.
- Your health contributes significantly to your success on and off the job.
- Our number one goal is to keep you healthy and safe at work.



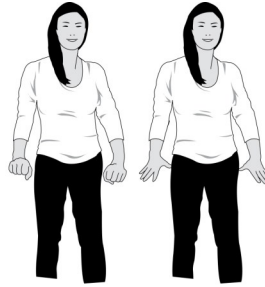
1. Warm up

Prepare the body to stretch and move. Walk briskly around the work area, walk in place, or perform any moderate physical exercise to increase the core temperature of your body.



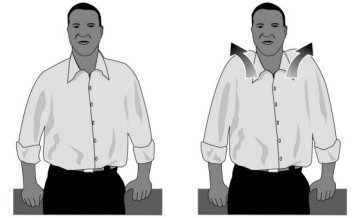
2. Neutral Standing

Take back what gravity has claimed! Stand tall. Relax your shoulders. Open your chest. Feet should form a comfortable base of support. Breathe normally.



3. Finger Stretch

Stand tall with your arms at your side. Slowly open and close your hands. When you open your hands, spread your fingers as wide as possible. Repeat 5X. Gently shake your hands when done.



4. Shoulder Rolls

Standing in neutral posture, slowly shrug your shoulders upward, roll them back and then down. Repeat this cycle 5X. Don't turtle your head forward.

Take micro breaks frequently throughout the day. Perform 1-2 favorite exercises, repeating them 1-2 times, between work tasks or when getting up from a prolonged static posture.

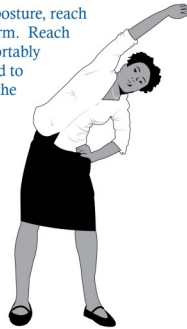


5. Reach for the Sky

Standing in neutral posture, reach up in front of your body over your head. Extend your reach as high as you comfortably can. Slightly extend your trunk and slowly lower your arms out to your sides. Open your chest as wide as possible. Repeat the movements 3X.

6. Side Bend Reach

Standing in neutral posture, reach overhead with one arm. Reach as high as you comfortably can. Gently side bend to the opposite side of the raised arm. Gently rotate your head toward the raised arm. Hold for 2-3 seconds, don't bounce. Repeat to the other side with the opposite arm raised. Repeat the movements 2X to each side.



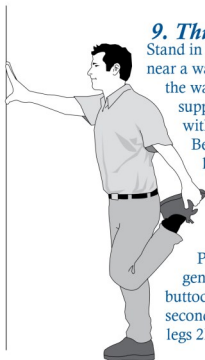
7. Trunk Rotation

Standing in neutral posture, keep your pelvis forward, slowly rotate your upper body, and look behind you. Your arms can be extended or your hands be placed on your hips. Hold for 2-3 seconds and repeat to the other side. Repeat 2X both sides.



8. Backward Bends

(Avoid if you are pregnant.) Stand in neutral posture. Place your hands on your hips, slightly bend your knees, and gently lean backward. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 3X.



9. Thigh Stretch

Stand in neutral posture near a wall or desk. Use the wall or desk for support and balance with the left hand. Bend the right knee backward and grasp the right ankle with the right hand. Pull the ankle gently toward your buttock. Hold for 3-5 seconds. Repeat both legs 2X.

11. Hip & Buttock Stretch



Sit in a chair or stool. Cross one leg over the other. Keeping the back erect, lean forward while keeping the crossed leg parallel to the floor. Hold for 3-5 seconds. Reverse the legs and repeat to the other side. Repeat 2X both legs.

Important Note!
If you are injured or previously experienced an injury, please consult with your physician before starting these exercises.

10. Hamstring Stretch

Stand in neutral posture. Place right leg forward, left leg to the side, rotated up to 90 degrees outward and slightly bent. Keep your back straight and head upright. Lean forward over the right straight leg with a straight trunk. Hold for 3-5 seconds and repeat on the other side. Complete 2X both sides.



12. Calf Stretch

Standing in neutral posture, place most of your weight on the right foot. Place the left foot in front of the body. Bear weight on the left heel and raise the toes off the ground until a stretch is felt in the right calf. Hold for 3-5 seconds. Repeat 3X both sides.



HOW

These stretches and movements should be done slowly and smoothly. Do not move in a jerky motion. Continue to breathe normally throughout the exercise session. Do not hold your breath. Modify any movement or stretch if you experience discomfort.

How to modify:

- Reduce the range of movement
- Reduce the number of repetitions
- Stop the exercise if none of the above helps

WHEN

Stretch at least twice daily.

Office Environment:
Midmorning and midafternoon

Manual Material Handling:
First thing in the morning before the workday begins and directly after lunch at the start of the second half of the workday.



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STRETCHING & MOVING

FOR YOUR HEALTH