



# 4 STRETCHES YOU SHOULD DO EVERY DAY

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Increase your range of motion and reduce stiffness in your joints with these moves.





# Becoming more flexible can enrich your life in many ways.

Ultimately, flexibility is about enjoying your life. By increasing your range of motion, you'll be less prone to injury while exercising, traveling or playing with your grandkids. You'll feel less stiff and more comfortable going about everyday activities like walking, lifting and bending. You'll improve your posture and circulation while relieving pain and stress.

So, where should an inflexible person begin? Fitness expert David Jack recommends doing these four stretches every day. (Watch a video demonstration [here](#).) You can do them anytime, anywhere. If you need extra support, you can do these moves next to a wall and use it for balance.

Warm up by walking in place for five minutes. As you stretch, breathe deeply and go slowly. Listen to your body, and never force a movement that causes pain. With regular stretching, your flexibility will improve.



The exercises shown here may be different or more advanced than those you'll experience in a SilverSneakers class. Please consult your physician before beginning a physical activity program to make sure it's safe for you.

# 1

## Stride with Spinal Rotation

This total-body stretch helps improve posture and eases tension in the back from sitting too long. It also opens up the rib cage and chest to allow for better breathing.



- Stand tall in front of a chair. If you need support, do this move next to a wall, and use it for balance.
- Place your left foot on the chair, and bring your hands together in front of your chest.
- Once you feel stable, slowly begin to rotate to the left.
- As you rotate, extend your arms diagonally so that your right arm gently presses against your left leg and your left arm is in the air.
- Hold for five seconds, and gently rotate back to center.
- Do five reps, then repeat on the other side.

# 2

## Single-Leg Hamstring Hinge

This stretch does two things at once. With the extended leg, it stretches the hamstrings and calves. With the bent leg, it strengthens the glutes, hips, and quads.



- Stand tall with your feet together. If you need support, do this move next to a wall, and use it for balance.
- Push your rear back as if you're trying to push open a door behind you, and hinge at your hips as you bend your left knee slightly.
- Keeping your right leg straight, place your right heel on the floor in front of you, with toes pointing toward the ceiling.
- Lower your torso to deepen the stretch, but only as far as comfortable. Be careful not to round your lower back. You can place your hands gently on your right leg, but you shouldn't be bearing down on it.
- Hold for three seconds, gently return to starting position, and repeat on the other side.
- Do eight reps per side.

# 3

## Lateral Squat Stretch

This side-to-side movement stretches areas not often reached by front-to-back movements: the inner and outer thighs. It also helps improve stability in the hips and ankles.



- Stand tall with your feet together and your hands gently touching in front of you. If you need support, do this move next to a wall, and use it for balance.
- With your right foot firmly on the ground, step out to the left with your left leg.
- Push your rear back slightly as if you're trying to push open a door behind you, and hinge at your hips as you bend your left knee.
- Your left knee should be aligned over your ankle. Your right leg should be straight, and you should feel a stretch on the inside of your leg.
- Hold for two seconds, and gently push off your left foot to return to starting position.
- Do six reps, then repeat on the other side. For a challenge, you can alternate sides for a total of six reps per side.

# 4

## Kneeling Elbow to Instep

This movement has a ton of benefits. It stretches the hip flexors and hamstrings, mobilizes the ankle, lengthens the spine, and wakes up some of the muscles that support the knees.



- Kneel on a mat or towel. If you prefer, place a pillow under your knees. If you need support, do this move next to a wall, and use it for balance.
- Step your right foot forward, and place your right hand on top of your leg.
- Once you feel stable, place both hands on the floor in front of you about shoulder-width apart.
- Bend your right elbow, and gently press your upper arm into your right calf to deepen the stretch. Keep your spine long as you gaze slightly forward and toward the floor.
- Hold for 10 seconds, and gently lift your torso back up to starting position.
- Do three reps, then repeat on the other side.



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