

Stretch & Flex Exercises



Make stretching a part of your daily routine

Important guidelines

If you have questions about your ability to perform any stretch, consult your physician.

- Before each stretch, relax and stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and knees slightly bent. Keep your back straight by contracting your abdomen.
- Do the stretches at your own individual rate and ability. Remember, you are not competing.
- Repeat each stretch, or set of stretches, three times.
- Stretch to the point of comfortable tension. Do not strain or bounce when stretching.
- Breathe in a relaxed manner.

Upper Body Stretches—



Shoulder Shrug

- Look straight ahead with arms relaxed at your sides.
- Lift shoulders up toward your ear lobes.
- Take a deep breath, count to three, and exhale.
- Roll shoulders back as you return them to their natural position.



Neck Stretch

- Look straight ahead, arms at your sides.
- Drop your left ear toward your left shoulder. Don't raise your shoulder.
- Take a deep breath, count to three, and exhale.
- Return your head to an upright position. Don't roll your head forward or backward.
- Repeat the exercise on the right.



Rotator Cuff Stretch

- Reach up and place your right hand on your upper back.
- Place the back of your left hand in middle of your back.
- Reach your right hand toward your left, attempting to grasp fingers together.
- Take a deep breath, count to three, and exhale.
- Repeat the exercise on the opposite side.



Back Extension Stretch

- Stand upright with feet shoulder-width apart.
- Place both hands on the small of your back.
- Lift your rib cage, arching your back.
- Take a deep breath, count to three, and exhale.
- Do not tip your head backward.



Shoulder Stretch

- Stand upright with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Clasp your hands behind your back.
- Raise clasped hands, bending your elbows slightly until you feel a stretch.
- Do not bend your body forward during the stretch.
- Take a deep breath, count to three, and exhale.

Mid Body Stretches—



Reach High

- Stand up straight with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Stretch your arms up over your head as high as you can.
- Spread your fingers.
- Take a deep breath, count to three, and exhale.



Wrist Curl Stretch

- With your arms at your sides and your knuckles forward, make loose fists.
- Curl fists in the direction of your elbows.
- Take a deep breath, count to three, exhale, and relax your fists.



Palm Press Stretch

- Place your palms together with fingers at chin level.
- While keeping your palms together, press and lower your hands until you feel a stretch.
- Be careful not to raise your shoulders.
- Take a deep breath, count to three, exhale.



Side Bending Stretch

- Stand upright with your feet shoulder-width apart, and place your left hand on your waist.
- Reach overhead with your right arm. Bend slightly to the left, letting the weight of your right arm create the stretch.
- Take a deep breath, count to three, exhale, and repeat the exercise on opposite side.



Side Turning Stretch

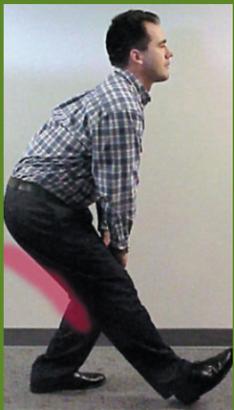
- Stand upright with your feet shoulder-width apart and your left hand on your right hip.
- Reach your right arm straight up from your side, then move it slightly back with your palm forward and thumb up. Look over your right shoulder at your right hand.
- Take a deep breath, count to three, exhale, and repeat the exercise on opposite side.



Cat Stretch

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Bend down, putting your hands on slightly bent knees.
- Look up, pointing your chin at the ceiling and creating an arch in your back.
- Take a deep breath. As you exhale, count to three, tuck your chin into your chest, and round your back.

Lower Body Stretches—



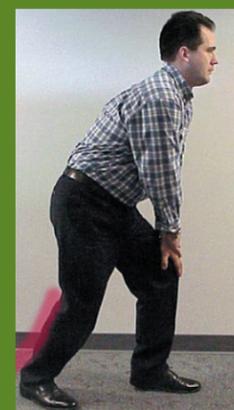
Hamstring

- Stand up straight, with your feet slightly apart. Slightly bend your left leg, putting hands on your left knee.
- Extend your right leg, keeping your heel on the floor. Look straight ahead.
- Increase stretch by bending your left knee more and pointing the toes of your right leg toward your chin.
- Take a deep breath, count to three, exhale, and repeat the exercise on the opposite side.



Quad

- Stand up straight with your feet slightly apart.
- Extend your left arm or use a wall for balance.
- Grasp your right ankle with your right hand and pull up toward your back.
- Keep your body in good alignment with your knees fairly close together.
- Take a deep breath, count to three, exhale, and repeat the exercise on the opposite side.



Calf

- Stand up straight with your feet slightly apart.
- Step forward with your left foot. Bend and put both hands on your left knee.
- Bend your right leg, leaning slightly forward and keeping both feet flat on the floor.
- Take a deep breath, count to three, exhale, and repeat the exercise on the opposite side.