

Everyday Stretches

Stretching should be done before and after activity or whenever you feel like it.

This series of stretches takes approximately twenty minutes.

Stretching should be done slowly without bouncing. Stretch to where you feel a slight, easy stretch. Hold this feeling for 5-30 seconds. As you hold this stretch, the feeling of tension should diminish. If it doesn't, just ease off slightly into a more comfortable stretch. The easy stretch reduces tension and readies the tissues for the developmental stretch.

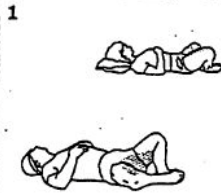
After holding the easy stretch, move a fraction of an inch farther into the stretch until you feel mild tension again. This is the developmental stretch which should be held for 5-30 seconds. This feeling of stretch tension should also slightly diminish or stay the

same. If the tension increases or becomes painful, you are over-stretching. Ease off a bit to a comfortable stretch. The developmental stretch reduces tension and will safely increase flexibility.

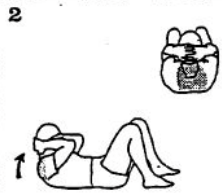
Hold only stretch tensions that feel good to you. The key to stretching is to be relaxed while you concentrate on the area being stretched. Your breathing should be slow, deep and rhythmic. Don't worry about how far you can stretch, stretch relaxed and limberness will become just one of the many by-products of regular stretching.

** Note: If you have had any recent surgery, consult your physician, your physical therapist or personal health care professional before starting a stretching program.*

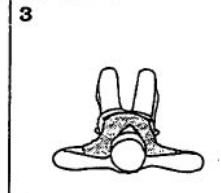
The correct areas are those areas of the body where you will feel tension from the stretch.



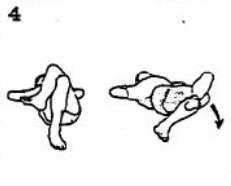
1 Relax with your knees bent and the soles of your feet together. This comfortable position will stretch your groin. Hold this for 30 seconds.



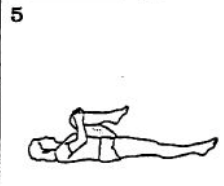
2 Insert your fingers behind your head and rest your arms on the mat. Using the power of your arms, slowly bring your head, neck, and shoulders forward until you feel a slight stretch. Hold an easy stretch for 3 seconds. Repeat three times. Do not overstretch.



3 **Shoulder Blade Pinch:** From the bent-knee position, pull your shoulder blades together to create tension in the upper back area. As you do this your chest should curve upward. Hold this contracted position for 2-3 seconds, then relax and gently pull your head forward as shown in stretch #2. This will help release tension and allow the neck to be stretched effectively.



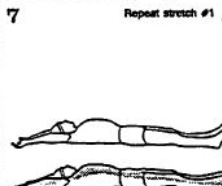
4 From a bent knee position, insert your fingers behind your head and lift the left leg over the right leg. From here, use your left leg to pull your right leg towards the floor until you feel a stretch along the sole of your foot and lower back. Stretch now relax. Keep the upper back, shoulders, and elbows flat on the floor. The idea is not to touch the floor with your right knee, but to stretch across your lumbar. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat stretch for other side.



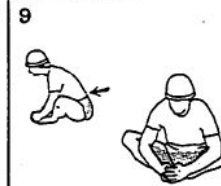
5 Next, straighten both legs and relax. Then pull your left leg towards your chest. For this stretch keep the back of your head on the mat, if possible, but don't strain. Hold an easy stretch for 30 seconds. Repeat, pulling your right leg toward your chest.



6 Bend your leg and, with your opposite hand, pull the knee leg up and over your other leg as shown above. Turn your head to look toward the head of the arm that is straight (head should be resting on the floor). Make sure the back of your shoulders are kept flat on the floor. Now, using your hand on your thigh pressing just above the knee, pull your knee leg down toward the floor until you get the right stretch feeling in your lower back and side of hip. Keep feet and ankles relaxed. Hold a comfortable stretch for 30 seconds, each side.



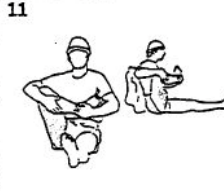
7 Repeat stretch #1



8 Put the soles of your feet together with your heels a comfortable distance from your groin. Now, join your hands around your feet and slowly pull yourself forward until you feel an easy stretch in the groin. Make your movement forward by bending from the hips and not from the shoulders. If possible, keep your elbows on the outside of your lower legs for greater flexibility during the stretch. Hold a comfortable stretch for 30-60 seconds.



10 Sit with your right leg straight. Bend your left leg, cross your left foot over and rest it to the outside of your right knee. Then bend your right elbow and rest it on the outside of your upper left thigh, just across the knee. During this stretch use the elbow to keep this leg stationary while compressed pressure is on the muscle. Note: when your left hand resting behind you, at the same time rotate your upper body toward your left hand and arm. As you rest your upper back, think of coming your feet in the same direction (toward your left) with your right elbow because your right elbow is resting on the left leg (stationary). This should give you a stretch in your upper back and side of



11 To stretch the upper hamstrings and hip, hold on to the outside of your seat with one hand, with your other hand and forearm around your back knee. Gently pull the leg as one arm toward your chest and you feel an easy stretch in the back of the upper leg. You may wish to use one stretch while you rest your back against something for support. Hold




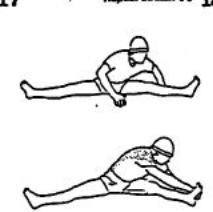





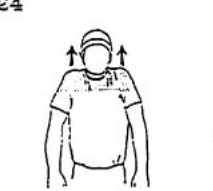

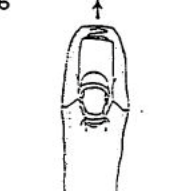




12 Sit with your right leg bent, with your right heel just on the outside of your right hip. The left leg is bent and the sole of your left foot is rest to the inside of your other right leg. (Try not to let your right foot flare out to the side in this position.) Now slowly lean forward back until you feel an easy stretch in your right hamstring. Use hands for balance and support.



13 After stretching your chest, practice grasping the backside on the sole of the feet leg as you turn the hip over. This will help stretch the front of your hip and give a better overall stretch to upper thigh area. After completing the best position



14 Repeat stretches #11-14 for other leg. Next, straighten your right leg. The sole of your left foot will be resting next to the inside of your straightened leg. Lean slightly forward from the hips and stretch the hamstring of your right leg. Find an easy stretch and relax. If you can't touch your toes comfortably, use a towel to ease your stretch. Hold for 30 seconds. Do not keep your knee, your right

<p>16</p>  <p>Set with your feet a comfortable distance apart. To stretch the hamstrings of your upper legs and hips, slowly lean forward from the hips. Be sure to keep your buttocks relaxed and feet together. Hold for 20 seconds. Keep your hands out in front of you for balance and stability or hold on to something for greater control. Use good posture with this stretch. Concentrate on keeping the lower back flat as you do this stretch. Do not strain.</p>	<p>17 Repeat stretch #8</p>  <p>To stretch your left hamstring and the right side of your back, slowly bend forward from the hips and lift the foot of your left leg. Hold for 20 seconds to each side.</p>	<p>19</p>  <p>As shown in the drawing above, move one leg forward until the knee of the forward leg is directly over the ankle. Your other knee should be resting on the floor. Now, without changing the position of the foot on the floor or the forward foot, lower the front of your torso until it rests on your stretch. This stretch should be felt in front of the hip and possibly in your hamstrings and groin. This will help reverse tension in the lower back. Hold the stretch for 20 seconds.</p>	<p>20</p>  <p>With your feet shoulder width apart and pointed out to about a 15° angle, heels on the ground, bend your torso and waist down. If you have elastic tubing in this position hold onto something for support. It is a great stretch for your ankles, Achilles tendons, groin, lower back and feet. Hold this stretch for 20 seconds. Be careful if you have had any knee problems. If pain is present, discontinue this stretch.</p>	<p>21</p>  <p>To stretch your calf, stand a little ways from a solid support and lean on it with your forearms. Your head resting on your hands, bend one leg and place your foot on the ground in front of you leaving the other leg straight. Bend your slowly move your feet forward until you feel a stretch in the calf of your straight leg. Be sure to keep the heel of the foot of the straight leg on the ground and your toes pointed straight ahead. Hold on each stretch for 20 seconds. Do not strain. Stretch both legs.</p>
<p>22</p>  <p>Now, to stretch the calves and Achilles tendons, slightly bend the back knee, keeping it over the flat. This gives you a more lower stretch which is also good for maintenance of regular ankle flexibility. 15 seconds, each leg. This area needs only a slight feeling of stretch.</p>	<p>23</p>  <p>Opposite hand to previous foot — strain and knee stretch. Hold top of left foot (from inside of foot) with right hand and gently pull, heel moving toward midline. The knee bends at a natural angle in this position and gives a good stretch to knee and quadriceps. Especially good to do if you have had sprains or fat pads sticking at the knee stretch position standing, as when pulling the right heel to meet with the right (standing) hand. Putting opposite hand to opposite foot does not strain any stretch region in the knee and is especially good to knee rehab and with sprains knee. Hold for 20 seconds. Do both legs.</p>	<p>24</p>  <p>Shoulder Stretch: Raise the top of your shoulders over your ears with your feet slightly apart or your feet and shoulders. Hold this stretch for 20-30 seconds, then raise your shoulders slowly and raise your arms overhead. Do this 2-3 times. Good to use at the first signs of symptoms or tension in the shoulder and neck area.</p>	<p>25</p>  <p>From a standing, forward leaning position with your chin over and your feet shoulder to chest, lift one of the right side of your feet. Hold correct stretch position for 10-20 seconds. Do both sides.</p>	<p>26</p>  <p>In a standing or sitting position, rest your feet on a raised surface. Now, with your hands clasped behind your head, slowly lean back and up. Feel the stretch in your shoulders and upper back. Hold for 20-30 seconds. Do both sides.</p>
<p>27</p>  <p>With arms extended, bend the elbow of one arm with the hand of the other arm. Keeping torso slightly bent (1 inch), gently pull your elbow across your head as you bend from your feet to the back. Hold on each stretch for 10 seconds. Do both sides. Keeping your knees slightly bent will give you better balance and will stretch your back.</p>	<p>28 Repeat stretch #25</p>  <p>The best stretch is done with your fingers interlaced behind your back. Slowly raise your arms overhead while simultaneously raising your arms. An excellent stretch for shoulders and arms. This is good to do when you find yourself slumping forward from your shoulders. This stretch can be done at any time. Hold for 2-3 seconds. Do twice.</p>	<p>30</p>  <p>Place your hand shoulder width apart on a fence or step and let your right foot come down to you and your knees slightly bent (1 inch). Your feet should be directly above your feet. To change the area of the stretch, bend your lower leg in the same and/or place your hands at different heights. Find a stretch that you can hold for at least 10 seconds. This will take some of the stress out of a tired upper back. The top of the refrigerator or a file cabinet are good to use for this stretch. If necessary, do several times your feet while coming out of the stretch.</p>	 <p>With your thumb, massage up and down the longitudinal arch of your foot. Use circular motions with a good amount of pressure in upward motion. Do both feet. Always massage your feet for 2-3 minutes before and after exercise, or any kind of walking for long periods of time. This will reduce any stress tension and keep the feet and legs feeling good.</p> <p>Stretch your feet. It is good for circulation and relaxation of tired legs and mind. Your lower back should be flat and the arches of the feet on the floor. Do not stretch your feet for too long in the beginning; probably restrict the time to five minutes or so.</p>	<p>Bob and Jean Anderson, creators of the stretching guide are also the authors of the book STRETCHING.</p> <p>For a free catalog and ordering information of currently available stretching tape publications write to Bob and Jean Anderson, Inc., P.O. Box 757, Fairport, LAKE, CO 80502, U.S.A. (719) 481-3528 1-800-222-1207</p> 