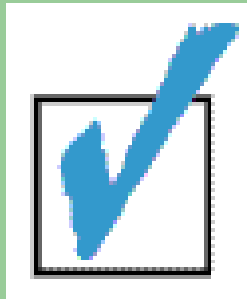


All About Stretching

Going for the 3 Increases: Increase in Health, Increase in Happiness & Increase in Energy

Strategies for
Success in Health
Management

By: James J. Messina, Ph.D.





Benefits of regular and slow stretching

- Increases range of motion & coordination
- Improves flexibility
- Improves balance
- Releases stiff joints
- Reduces muscular tension
- Improves circulation
- Enhances muscle tone
- Reduces stress



Benefits of Stretching Before & After Exercise Workout

- Flexibility - ability to move a joint throughout its range of motion
- Maintaining flexibility necessary for optimal performance of body
- Flexible body less prone to low back pain
- May also improve circulation to joints
- May decelerate joint degenerative processes



Some key points to remember when stretching

1. Slowly & gradually lengthen muscle in controlled manner till slight discomfort
2. Hold position for 15 to 30 seconds
3. Refrain from quick jerky motions or bouncing, which can result in sprains
4. Proper alignment is critical for maximum benefits. When joints are correctly moved through full range of motion flexibility increases by as much as 50%



A stretch you can do anytime anywhere

- Clasp your hands and reach your arms up towards the ceiling then turn your palms out and stretch
- Take a big breath and extend your reach even more



The Towel Stretch - For Side body muscles

- Grab medium-size towel & stand with feet slightly wider than shoulder width
- Reach arms overhead with hands about 2 or 3 feet apart standing tall as you reach up & out to one side, stretching to the point of moderate tension
- Hold 10 to 15 seconds, breathing naturally
- Slowly return to vertical position, then repeat on other side



Neck – Rolls

Neck Rolls

- Either sitting or standing
- Drop chin down to chest, then keeping chin down close to body, roll neck from shoulder to shoulder in a smooth controlled motion
- Side to side 10 times



Neck – Holds

Neck Holds

- Sit tall on chair holding side of chair with left hand & reach right hand over hand, placing it on left ear
- Drop right ear down to right shoulder, stop when you feel mild tension
- Hold for 15 seconds. Release then repeat to the left



Triceps

Behind Head Triceps Stretch

- Drop chin down to chest, reach right arm straight up overhead, palm forward
- Bend elbow drop right hand to back of neck palm facing in. Reach overhead with left arm grasp below right elbow with left hand, gently pulling right arm to the left
- Feel mild tension in back of right upper arm. Hold 15 seconds, repeat on other side



Forearms

Kneeling Forearm Stretch

- Kneel with palms flat, fingers pointing back toward knees
- Slowly lean backwards, keeping palms flat to the floor
- Feel mild tension through the wrists and forearms. Hold 15 seconds



Abdominals

Prone Abdominal Stretch

- Lie face down with palms down, directly under shoulders, toes pointed
- Exhale as you extend arms straight, keeping head in line with the spine
- Feel mild tension through the abdominals.
- Hold 5 seconds. Repeat 3 times.



Torso

Standing Torso Reach

- Stand with feet outside shoulder width, toes pointing straight ahead
- Place right hand on right hip for support and reach left arm up and over head, bending torso to the right
- Feel mild tension up through left side of torso. Hold 15 seconds. Repeat on other side



Standing Torso Reach



- **Side Stretch**
Keeping your hips steady and knees slightly bent, gently reach overhead to one side



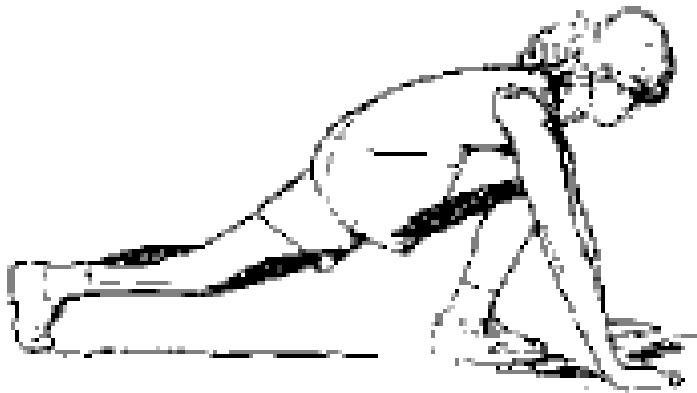
Inner Thighs

Seated Inner Thigh Stretch

- Sit tall with knees bent, bottoms of feet together, feet close to body
- With hand on knees, lean chest forward slightly as you push knees down
- Feel mild tension in inner thigh
- Hold 15 seconds.



Groin Stretch



- Squat put both hands on floor in front of you
- Stretch left leg straight out behind
- Keep right foot flat on floor lean forward with chest into right knee
- Then gradually shift weight back to left leg, keeping it as straight as possible. Hold 15 seconds, repeat other side



Hamstrings

Seated Hamstring Stretch

- Sit with right leg extended out straight, knee soft (slight bend) & right foot flexed, left leg bent, with left foot resting next to inside of right leg
- Lean forward from the hips and reach for your ankle
- Feel mild tension in back of upper right leg. Hold 15 seconds, repeat other side



Hamstring



- **Standing Hamstring Stretch**
- Gently straighten both legs as you lean your body forward on hard surface, wall, tree, etc



Supine Hamstring Stretch



- Lie with knees bent, feet flat. Lift right leg, with leg straight, knee soft (slightly bent), foot flexed. With both hands reach around right leg. Keep hips down, as gently pull right leg toward your body. Feel mild tension in back of upper right leg. Hold 15 seconds, repeat on other side



Shoulders

Door way Stretch

- Stand in a doorway
- Bend elbows to a 90 degree angle and place forearms against the door frame
- Lean forward, feeling mild tension in the front of shoulders. Hold 15 seconds



Biceps Front Arms

Palm Up Stretch

- Either sitting or standing. Extend right arm in front of body with palm facing up
- Grasp right fingers with left hand, and gently pull right fingers back and towards your body
- Feel mild tension through front of upper arm. Hold 15 seconds, then repeat on other side



Chest

Behind Back Chest Stretch

- **Stand tall. Reach both hands behind & interlock fingers**
- **Straighten arms. Pull shoulder blades together & down as lift chest up, keeping neck down. Feel mild tension through chest. Hold 15 seconds**

T Stretch

- **Either sitting or standing, extend arms straight out to the side, with palms forward. Relax neck as you press straight arms back a hold, feeling mild tension through the chest. Hold 15 seconds**



Back

Supine Low Back Stretch

- Lie on floor or ground with both knees bent, feet flat on floor or ground
- Keeping feet and knees together, lift feet off floor reaching around behind knees with hands, hugging knees into chest, while keeping back flat to the mat
- Hold 15 seconds



Hips-Buttocks

Lying Outer Hip Stretch

- Lie on floor with knees bent, right ankle on the left thigh just below left knee
- Reach around left leg with both hands & gently pull left knee up and towards body
- Feel mild tension in the right hip and buttocks. Hold 15 seconds, repeat on other side



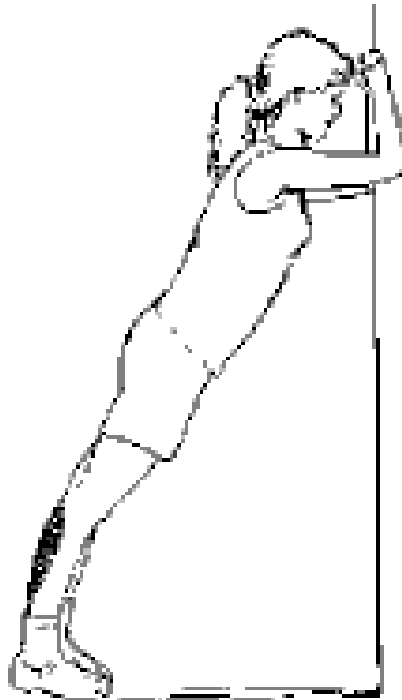
Calves

Standing Soleous Stretch

- Stand about 12 inches away from wall or tree\
- Place forearms against wall & lean forward
- Step back with the right leg, bend right knee, & press right heel down
- Feel mild tension in the right calf. Hold 15 seconds, repeat on other side



Calf Stretch



- **Standing 2 feet away from wall**
- **Keeping heels flat & back straight**
- **Lean forward slowly**
- **Press hands & forehead to wall**
- **Feel stretching in area above heels (shaded in the picture) Hold stretch 15 seconds**
- **Repeat on other side**



Calves Achilles/Calf Stretch

Standing Gastroc Stretch



- Stand about 12 inches away from wall Place forearms against wall & lean forward Step back with the right leg, keeping right leg straight & press right heel down. Feel mild tension in right calf. Hold 15 seconds, repeat on other side



Quadriceps-Front of Leg

Side Lying Quadriceps Stretch

- Lie on floor on left side. Left arm extended straight out, head resting on left arm
- Keep left leg straight. Bend right knee, & reach back with right hand grasping right ankle, pressing heel towards buttocks.
- Feel mild tension in front of thigh. Hold 15 seconds, repeat on other side
- **BE CAREFUL NOT TO OVER STRETCH KNEE**



Standing Quadriceps Stretch

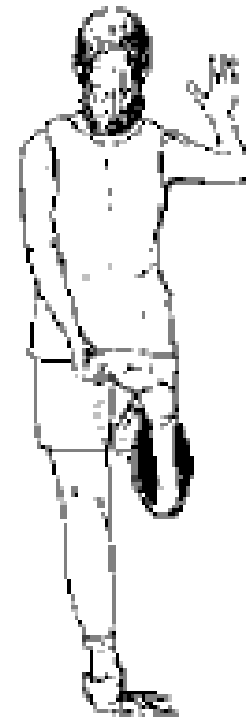


- Gently grasp your ankle with the opposite hand, pointing your knee to the ground
- Feel mild tension in front of thigh. Hold 15 seconds, repeat on other side
- **BE CAREFUL NOT TO OVER STRETCH KNEE**



Another view of Standing Quadriceps Stretch

- **Stand holding wall or chair for balance. Bend right knee up behind you as you reach back and grasp right ankle with right hand, keeping the knee close to the body, pulling the heel towards the buttocks. Feel mild tension in front of thigh. Hold 15 seconds, repeat on other side.**





Other online resources on stretching

- Stretch your body:
<http://exercise.about.com/cs/flexibility/l/blstretch.htm>
- Stretching exercises for women:
http://www.womensheart.org/content/Exercise/stretching_exercise.asp