

STRETCHING PROGRAM

STRETCH LEADER'S GUIDE

bluestem brands, inc. **STRETCH LEADER'S GUIDE**

WELCOME

Welcome to the Stretch Leader's Guide

As a *Stretch Leader* you are an essential part in making the stretching program a success. We'll go through the step-by-step information you need to guide your stretch group to safely and effectively use stretching to its full advantage. We will detail why stretching is beneficial, how and when it makes sense to stretch, the rules of the road to make sure stretching is performed safely and correctly and how to monitor your group's stretching performance.

You will learn how to lead five stretching routines of six stretches each. Each routine is about 3 to 4 minutes in length.

WHY STRETCH?

Why stretch? Good question. Here are three reasons.

Connective Tissue

Go to your refrigerator, take out a piece of cold taffy. Give it a stretch and guess what... it doesn't stretch that is. In fact, what it does do is break! Next warm-up the taffy and then give it a stretch — now it actually stretches.

Taffy is a lot like the connective tissue that forms the matrix of our muscles, ligaments, tendons, nerves, blood vessels and so on. When warm these tissues are much more likely to stretch and not be injured compared to when they are cold and stiff.

Blood Flow

Second, stretching increases blood flow to the muscles. With exertion, oxygen and energy sources in the muscles are used up, fatigue is the result.

Stretching enhances circulation to help replenish needed oxygen and energy supplies to the body and also helps to flush waste products out of the muscles. Stretching helps to control fatigue throughout the day.

Joint Lubrication

And third, stretching helps to protect the body's joints by stimulating the joints themselves to produce lubricating fluid; the result is less joint wear and tear and improved joint flexibility.

So, bottom line, with an investment of just a few minutes a day, stretching helps us to feel more alert, prevent injuries, reduce muscle tension, improve flexibility and overall just feel better!

WHEN TO STRETCH?

When does it make sense to stretch?

Group Stretching Sessions

Well, led by a Stretch Leader, going through a series of stretches in a group session works well. Each session lasts about 3 to 4 minutes and includes 6 stretches.

You have five different routines you will rotate through so you won't do the same routine every time. Depending on your specific situation you may conduct 1 or 2 sessions during the shift.

Generally, a good time to do the group session is as the shift starts or after return from a break.

Individual Stretches Sessions

Then, to maximize stretching benefits, also encourage individuals to do individual stretches throughout the shift. A typical stretch takes about 20 to 30 seconds. Think about it this way. In terms of breathing we don't take one big breath and hold it for the day! We need to breathe on a regular basis. Thinking of stretching as "Breathing for the muscles," and you will get the picture.

Use a particular stretch to a particular job task or part of the body. For example, if the hands have been used to grip parts and tools one of the arm or shoulder stretches makes sense. For reaching forward or lifting activities: one of the shoulder or back stretches works to help control fatigue.

WHAT ARE STRETCH RULES/GUIDELINES?

Next let's go through three absolute Stretching Rules and several simple Stretches Guidelines for stretching to be used safely and effectively.

Stretch Rules

1.) **Follow Medical Restrictions**

First and most importantly, make sure everyone absolutely follows any doctor's orders for any restricted activities. If you notice a person in your group is not doing a stretch find out why.

Modify Stretches

Almost everyone can do some form of the stretches and for some individuals the stretches may need to be modified to meet their restrictions. Effective ways to modify stretches are to not push the stretch quite as far, do only part of the stretch, (for example Large Arm Circles done with only one arm) and if needed refrain from doing the stretch entirely, replacing it with a stretch the person can do.

Medical Concerns

Our goal is to include everyone in the stretching program. We will contend that if a person is able to be at work, they can participate in the stretching program, albeit with modifications as needed.

If you do have any medical concerns about any person in the group, make sure you talk with them and refer to the appropriate resource if needed, for example, the supervisor or manager, Safety Department or Human Resources.

2.) **Technically Correct**

Second, the stretches must be performed with correct technique. Sloppy technique will not provide the desired benefits and increases the risk of technique related issues. As you monitor your group's stretching techniques please closely follow the techniques as demonstrated in the videos.

If you notice an incorrect technique, a good way to instruct is to do a "refresher" on technique for the whole group. In some cases, you may need to talk with the individual privately to determine the reason for the technique issue.

bluestem brands, inc. **Stretching**

ROUTINE ONE

| | | | | | |
|-----------|------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Chin Tuck | Elbow Pull | Hands Together | Large Arm Circles | Power Squat | Back Bend |
|-----------|------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------|

ROUTINE TWO

| | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------------|---------------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Chicken Neck | Elbow Pull - Back | Shoulder Roll | High Reach | Straddle | Back Bend |
|--------------|-------------------|---------------|------------|----------|-----------|

ROUTINE THREE

| | | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Neck Side | Stick'em Up | Wrist Flexion | High Reach - Side | Hammstrings | Back Bend |
|-----------|-------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------|

ROUTINE FOUR

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Neck Side - Reach | Arm Cross Pull | Wrist Extension | Back Rotate Hug | Heel Cord | Back Bend |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|

ROUTINE FIVE

| | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|-----------|
| Neck Rotation | Shoulder Strug | Wrist Rotation | Back Rotate Head | Ankle Circles | Back Bend |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|-----------|

Produced for Bluestem Brands, Inc. by ErgoSystems Consulting Group, Inc. www.ergosystemsconsulting.com Version 052019

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3.) Energy Input / Output

Third, the benefits derived from the stretches are directly tied to the effort exerted. If very little energy goes in to perform the stretches very little energy comes out and the result is minimal or no benefit.

Encourage the group to put in the effort to get the reward!

Stretching Guidelines

With those three Stretching Rules in mind, here are specific guidelines to ensure the stretches are done in a safe and effective way.

Stretching logistics

Generally, each stretch is performed for 2 to 3 repetitions. If the stretch is held, it is held for a slow count of 3.

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . .

Neutral position

Remember to always start the stretch from the Neutral Body Position.

The Neutral Position is with the head balanced over the shoulders, shoulders over hips, hips over knees and knees in line with the ankles and feet.



Breathing

Always instruct the group to breathe in with the effort of the stretch and out with the relaxation. **Do not hold the breath the duration of the stretch.**

Joint noises

Some joint noises - snaps, crackles and pops - are normal, but if the person hears or feels more than this stop the stretch and investigate. It may be less intensity needs to be used.

Controlled stretches

Always move in a slow controlled graceful manner with no fast, jerky movements.

Typically, a person will feel a gradual stretch when moving the joints and muscles through their range of motion. Pain should not be experienced.

Intensity

How hard should a stretch be pushed? Start with a lower intensity and increase with a favorable response.

A stretching program is not a “sprint”, rather it is more like a “marathon” – slow and steady gets the job done.



Regular and consistent performance

Perform the stretches on a regular day-in/day-out basis. Make them a habit.

Recall that stretches are really ‘breathing’ for the muscles. Just like we need to take oxygen into our lungs on a consistent basis we also need to do stretches on a regular and consistent basis.

Assess response

As a Stretching leader, a major component of your role is to assess the group’s response to the stretches. Here are some typical normal comments:

- **“I feel warmth in the body area that has been stretched.”** (This may linger for a few minutes – it actually means blood flow has been enhanced to the area!)
- **“I feel a tingling in the area stretched.”** (It goes away shortly after the stretch is released- nerves and other tissue have been stretched.)
- **“Stretching make me yawn!”** (This is a very common response – a yawn is simply a deep breath in.)

Here are some comments to watch out for with the potential need to refrain from or modify the stretch:

- **“I am still really sore after I stretch.”**
- **“I feel dizzy or light-headed.”**
- **“I feel pain into my arm or leg.”**

We want each person to receive benefit from the stretching program and make sure it is safe and effective for them.

NEXT STEPS AND TIPS

So far, we have talked about Why and When to stretch. We went through the three absolute Stretching Rules and several simple Stretches Guidelines for stretching to be used safely and effectively.

Teach the Stretches to the Group

When you lead your group, a typical method is to first teach the stretches to the group by showing them the videos of the routines and once they have learned the stretches you can play the audio of the stretches with reference to the posters when you do the group stretch. Remember to encourage them to do individual stretches on their own.

Rotate through the Five Routines

As you lead the stretches rotate through the five routines to add variety to the stretching program. Also, you don’t always have to lead the group yourself. Ask for volunteers in your group to lead sometimes.

Now it is time to learn the stretches that make up the five stretching routines. As you review the videos of the stretches also refer to the posters.

Thanks for your time and attention!

SAFETY FIRST!!

ALWAYS MAKE SURE THE GROUP IS USING PROPER TECHNIQUE, PAY ATTENTION TO THE GROUP’S RESPONSE TO THE STRETCHES AND REPORT ANY CONCERNS OR ISSUES.

Stretching Routines Step-by-Step

ROUTINE ONE

| Chin Tuck | Elbow Pull | Hands Together | Large Arm Circles | Power Squat | Back Bend |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place fingers on chin 2. Tuck chin 3. Pull head straight back 4. Hold for 3 count 5. Relax 6. Repeat 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place hands on back of neck 2. Pull elbows back, squeeze shoulder blades together 3. Hold for 3 count 4. Return to start position 5. Repeat 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start with hands at head level with palms together 2. Lower hands to chest level, keeping palms together 3. Hold for 3 count 4. Return to start position 5. Repeat sequence 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place arms in front 2. Cross wrists 3. Circles arms overhead – breathe in on the way up 4. Breathe out as you continue the circle to lower your arms 5. Return to start position 6. Repeat sequence 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stand with feet wider than shoulders 2. Place hands on hips 3. Keep head and shoulders up 4. Lower hips and bend knees keeping heels flat on the floor. 5. Slide hands to knees 6. Go as low as comfortable. 7. Repeat 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start in neutral position 2. Place hands on belt line 3. Bend backward. 4. Let head naturally follow shoulders. 5. Hold for 3 count 6. Return to neutral position 7. Repeat 2 times |

ROUTINE TWO

| Chicken Neck | Elbow Pull | Shoulder Roll | High Reach | Straddle | Back Bend |
|--|--|---|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Glide head forward - protrude chin 2. Tuck chin - pull head straight back 3. Relax to neutral position 4. Repeat 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interlock fingers behind back 2. Pull your shoulders straight back 3. Try to touch your elbows together 4. Hold for 3 count 5. Repeat 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roll shoulders forward to make big circles 3 times 2. 1... 2... 3 3. Relax shoulders 4. Roll your shoulders backward to make 3 big circles 5. 1... 2... 3 6. Return to the neutral position | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start in neutral position with arms at sides 2. Take deep breath, reach arms to ceiling 3. Stretch high 4. Hold at top for 3 count 5. Exhale, return to neutral position 6. Repeat 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stand with wide base 2. Support body weight with hand on knee 3. Maintain other knee straight 4. Go low as comfortable 5. Return to start position and repeat 6. Switch legs and repeat sequence 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start in neutral position 2. Place hands on belt line 3. Bend backward. 4. Let head naturally follow shoulders. 5. Hold for 3 count 6. Return to neutral position 7. Repeat 2 times |

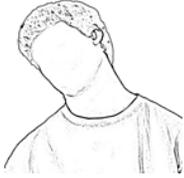
ROUTINE THREE

| Neck Side | Stick'em Up | Wrist Flexion | High Reach - Side | Hamstring | Back Bend |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Look straight ahead, arms at sides 2. Tip head to side to lay ear on shoulder 3. Hold for 3 count 4. Return to neutral 5. Repeat on other side 6. Repeat sequence 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place arms in "Stick'em up" position 2. Pull your elbows straight back and squeeze your shoulder blades together 3. Hold for 3 count 4. Relax the stretch 5. Repeat 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extend arm out to front 2. With elbow straight, bend wrist down to stretch, make a fist 3. Hold for 3 count 4. Relax stretch 5. Repeat 6. Repeat on other wrist 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start in neutral position with arms at sides 2. Interlock fingers, reach arms to ceiling 3. Bend to one side 4. Hold for 3 count 5. Repeat to other side 6. Repeat sequence | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place leg forward with heel on floor 2. With hands on hips, keep head and shoulders upright 3. Bend opposite knee to lower hips and stretch behind knee 4. Hold for 3 count 5. Relax stretch 6. Repeat 7. Switch legs and repeat sequence | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start in neutral position 2. Place hands on belt line 3. Bend backward. 4. Let head naturally follow shoulders. 5. Hold for 3 count 6. Return to neutral position 7. Repeat 2 times |

ROUTINE FOUR

| Neck Side - Reach | Arm Cross Pull | Wrist Extension | Back Rotate Hug | Heel Cord | Back Bend |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Look straight ahead, hand on head other arm out to side 2. Tip head to side to lay ear on shoulder 3. Hold for 3 count 4. Return to neutral 5. Repeat 6. Repeat on the other side 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place hand on opposite shoulder 2. Pull elbow toward body with other hand 3. Hold for 3 count 4. Repeat 5. Repeat on other side 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extend arm out to front 2. With elbow straight, bend wrist up to stretch 3. Hold for 3 count 4. Repeat 5. Repeat on other side 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start in neutral position with arms at sides 2. Swing one arm to front and one arm to back as you rotate your trunk 3. Return to neutral 4. Repeat to other side 5. Repeat sequence 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place one foot behind the other with both feet pointed straight ahead 2. Keep heel of the back foot flat 3. Keep head and shoulders upright, bend front knee 4. Hold for a 3 count 5. Repeat 6. Switch legs and repeat sequence | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start in neutral position 2. Place hands on belt line 3. Bend backward. 4. Let head naturally follow shoulders. 5. Hold for 3 count 6. Return to neutral position 7. Repeat 2 times |

ROUTINE FIVE

| Neck Rotation | Shoulder Shrug | Wrist Rotation | Back Rotate Head | Ankle Circles | Back Bend |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rotate head/neck to one side, 2. Rotate head to middle, look down 3. Rotate head to other side, 4. Rotate head to middle, look down 5. Repeat sequence 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shrug shoulders up to ears 2. Hold for 3 count 3. Slowly lower shoulders, do not drop them 4. Repeat 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold one wrist supported 2. Rotate supported wrist in one direction 5 times 3. Relax 4. Repeat in other direction 5 times 5. Repeat sequence with other wrist | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start in neutral position with arms at sides 2. Place hands on back of head as you rotate your trunk 3. Return to neutral 4. Repeat to other side 5. Repeat sequence 2 times | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use support for balance, if needed 2. Circle ankle 5 times each way. 3. Repeat with other ankle | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start in neutral position 2. Place hands on belt line 3. Bend backward. 4. Let head naturally follow shoulders. 5. Hold for 3 count 6. Return to neutral position 7. Repeat 2 times |

NOTES: