

## WHY SHOULD YOU STRETCH?

### Taffy

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.

### Increased Blood Flow

Stretching not only warms up the body, it also increases blood flow to the working tissues of the body to provide more oxygen and nutrition.

### Control Joint Stiffness

Stretching helps to control joint stiffness; less stiff, more flexible and more comfortable!

### Bottom Line . . . Why Stretch?

- Improves alertness levels
- Helps to prevent injuries
- Controls stress
- Reduces muscle tension
- Increases flexibility
- IT FEELS GOOD!



## WHEN SHOULD YOU STRETCH?

Stretch before work, during breaks and after physical activity. This will help you get ready, keep you ready and help you to cool down once the activity is done.

### Group Stretch Sessions

Stretching as a group is a great way to stretch. When the group as a whole stretches each individual member of the group feels more comfortable doing the stretches.

### Individual Stretch Sessions

Periodically (every 30 to 60 minutes) also do one or two of the stretches at a time. Tie the particular stretch to a particular job task or part of the body—for example if you have been using hands to grip materials and tools do one of the hand stretches.

## HOW SHOULD YOU STRETCH?

### Stretching Rules

**Follow Medical Restrictions** Absolutely have to follow doctor’s orders for any restricted activities.

**Technically Correct** Stretches must be performed correctly. Sloppy technique will not provide desired benefits and increases the risk of technique related problems.

**Energy Input/Output** Stretching benefits are directly tied to effort exerted. If very little energy goes in very little energy comes out with little or no benefit.

### Stretching Guidelines

**Joint noises** Some joint noises - snaps, crackles and pops - are normal, but if you hear or feel more than this stop the movement and investigate.

**Regular and consistent performance** Stretching is really ‘breathing’ for the muscles and other tissues of the body. Just like you need to take oxygen into your lungs on a consistent basis you need to stretch regularly.

**Neutral position** Stretch from the Neutral Body Position.

**Breathing** Do not hold your breath when stretching. Inhale with the stretch and exhale with relaxation of the stretch.

**Controlled stretching** Always stretch in a slow controlled graceful way with no fast, jerky movements. You should not experience any ‘pain’ during the stretch.

**Intensity** Start slow and increase intensity on a gradual level. Don’t compete with anyone. Listen to what your body is telling you about how hard to push.

**Assess response** Always assess response on an on-going basis. Here are some comments to consider.

### Typical normal comments:

- “I feel warmth in the area stretched.” (This may linger for a few minutes – 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 have been stretched.)

### Comments to watch out for and may call for modification of the stretch:

- “I am still really sore after I stretch.” (Need to back off on intensity.)
- “I feel pain down into my arm or leg.” (Quite rare, indicates the need for further investigation.)

### Unacceptable sensations

- Discomfort does not go away with warm up activity
- Radiating pain into the arm or leg
- Dizziness
- Sick to stomach feeling

### Modify Stretch

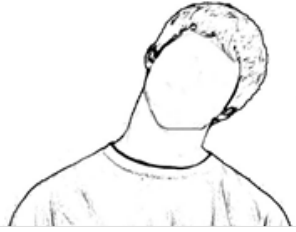
- Decrease range of movement
- Decrease forcefulness
- Refrain from stretch
- If under control - gradually add back into routine.
- If issue not resolved - refer to appropriate party.

## SAFETY FIRST!!

Always use proper technique, pay attention to your body’s response to the stretches and immediately report any concerns or issues.

# Stretching ROUTINE ONE

## Neck Side Stretch



Look straight ahead, arms at sides  
Tip head to side to lay ear on shoulder  
Hold for count of 3  
Return to neutral  
Repeat on other side  
Repeat sequence 2 times

## Shoulder Shrug



Shrug shoulders up to the ears  
Hold for count of 3  
Relax  
Repeat 2 times

## Elbow Pull



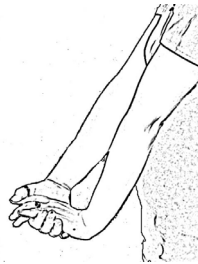
Place hands on back of neck  
Pull elbows back, squeeze shoulder blades together  
Hold for count of 3  
Relax arms/shoulder  
Repeat 2 times

## Wrist/Elbow Flex – Arm Down



Extend arm down to side  
With elbow straight, bend wrist down to stretch, make a fist  
Hold for count of 3  
Relax  
Repeat on other side.  
Repeat sequence 2 times

## Wrist/Elbow Extend – Arm Down



Extend arm down to side  
With elbow straight, bend wrist up to stretch  
Hold for count of 3  
Relax  
Repeat on other side.  
Repeat sequence 2 times

## Large Arm Circles



Place arms in front  
Cross wrists  
Make big arm circles as you can - breath in on the way up and out on the way down  
Go 3 times in one direction  
Relax arms to sides  
Repeat 3 times in other direction

## High Reach Both Hands



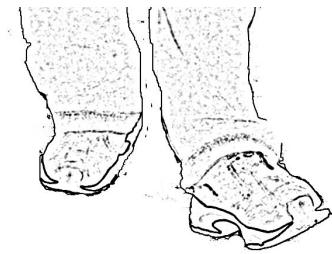
Start in neutral position with arms at sides  
Take a deep breathe and reach arms to ceiling  
Stretch it out  
Hold at top for count of 3  
Exhale and return to neutral position  
Repeat 2 times

## Back Bend



Start in neutral position  
Place hands on belt line  
Bend backward.  
Let head naturally follow shoulders.  
Hold for a count of 3  
Return to neutral position  
Repeat 2 times

## Ankle Circles



Use support for balance  
Circle ankle 5 times each way.  
Repeat with other ankle

# Stretching ROUTINE TWO

## Neck Side Arm Behind



Place arm behind back, pull down on hand with other hand/arm  
Tip head to side to lay ear on shoulder  
Hold for count of 3  
Return to neutral  
Repeat on the other side  
Repeat sequence 2 times

## Shoulder Roll



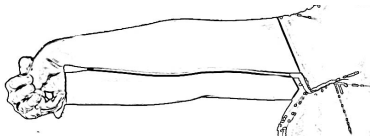
Roll shoulders 3 times in one direction, make small circles  
Relax shoulders  
Repeat sequence in other direction

## Elbow Pull – Hands Up



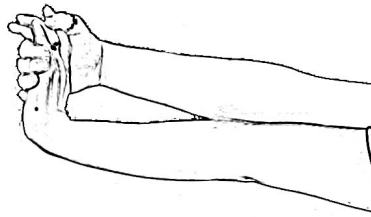
Place arms in “Stick’em up” position  
Hold for count of 3  
Relax arms to sides  
Repeat 2 times

## Wrist/Elbow Flex – Arm Out



Extend arm out to front  
With elbow straight, bend wrist down to stretch, make a fist  
Hold for count of 3  
Relax  
Repeat on other side.  
Repeat sequence 2 times

## Wrist/Elbow Extend – Arm Out



Extend arm out to front  
With elbow straight, bend wrist up to stretch  
Hold for count of 3  
Relax  
Repeat on other side.  
Repeat sequence 2 times

## High Reach Fingers Laced



Start in neutral position with arms at sides  
Interlock fingers, take a deep breath and reach arms to ceiling  
Stretch it out  
Hold at top for count of 2  
Exhale and return to neutral position  
Repeat 2 times

## Rotation Hug



Start in neutral position with arms at sides  
Swing one arm to front and one arm to back as you rotate your trunk  
Hold for count of 3  
Return to neutral  
Repeat to other side  
Repeat sequence 2 times

## Hamstring Floor



Place leg forward with heel on floor  
With hands on hips, keep head and shoulders upright  
Bend opposite knee to lower hips and stretch behind knee  
Hold for count of 3  
Return to neutral  
Repeat 2 times  
Switch legs and repeat sequence

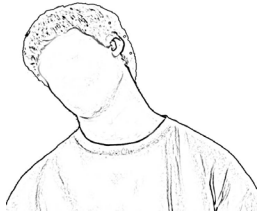
## Power Squat



Stand with feet wider than shoulders  
Place hands on knees  
Keep head and shoulders up  
Drop hips and bend knees keeping heels flat on the floor.  
Go as low as comfortable.  
Repeat 2 times

# Stretching ROUTINE THREE

## Neck Rotation



Rotate head/neck to one side, hold for count of 3  
 Rotate head to middle, look down  
 Rotate head to other side, look down, hold for count of 3  
 Repeat sequence 2 times

## Elbow Pull Behind Back



Interlock fingers behind back  
 Pull elbows together  
 Hold for count of 3  
 Repeat 2 times

## Pat Back



Raise one arm with elbow pointed ceiling  
 Use other hand to pull elbow backward  
 Hold for count of 3  
 Switch arms  
 Repeat 2 times

## Open Close Hand



Start with arms/hands in front of body  
 Open hands to spread fingers as wide as possible  
 Hold for count of 3  
 Close hands to make fists  
 Hold for count of 3  
 Relax hands  
 Repeat 2 times

## Large Arm Circles



Place arms in front  
 Cross wrists  
 Make big arm circles as you can - breath in on the way up and out on the way down  
 Go 3 times in one direction  
 Relax arms to sides  
 Repeat 3 times in other direction

## Side Stretch Arms Overhead



Start in neutral position with arms at sides  
 Interlock fingers, reach arms to ceiling  
 Bend to one side  
 Hold for count of 3  
 Repeat to other side  
 Repeat sequence 2 times

## Heel Cord



Place one foot behind the other with both feet pointed straight ahead  
 Keep the heel of the back foot flat  
 Keep the head and shoulders upright, bend the front knee  
 Hold for a count of 3  
 Repeat 2 times  
 Switch legs and repeat sequence

## Slump



Start in neutral position with arms at sides  
 Allow your back to bend to reach to the floor  
 Hold for count of 3  
**BEND YOUR KNEES** and return to neutral  
 Repeat 2 times

## Back Bend



Start in neutral position  
 Place hands on belt line  
 Bend backward.  
 Let head naturally follow shoulders.  
 Hold for a count of 3  
 Return to neutral position  
 Repeat 2 times