



MHealthy Physical Activity:

STRETCHING & FLEXIBILITY



Stretching is one of the basic components of a sound exercise program. Good flexibility is not only important for exercise, but also for daily activities such as bending down to put on socks or reaching overhead to grab a tool in your garage. Regular stretching should be a part of your daily exercise routine.

Flexibility is the ability to move a joint through its full range of motion.

WHY SHOULD I STRETCH?

- To improve joint range of motion
- To improve muscle performance
- To promote better circulation
- To reduce the chance of muscular injuries
- To help prevent muscle stiffness and soreness
- To help reduce tension and to encourage relaxation
- To help you develop better awareness of your body

WHEN SHOULD I STRETCH?

- To loosen your muscles, stretch after you warm-up but before you begin your physical activity.
- To increase your flexibility and improve your range of motion, stretch after your physical activity.
- Stretching can be done anytime, anywhere (as long as you're warmed up). Aim to stretch most days of the week, especially after your activity, even if you don't have time to exercise.

HOW DO I STRETCH?

- Stretch in a slow relaxed manner
- Stretch until you feel a slight discomfort (not pain) in the muscle
- Hold each stretch for at least 15-60 seconds
- Don't bounce
- Repeat each stretch one or more times
- Breathe normally

WHAT DO I STRETCH?

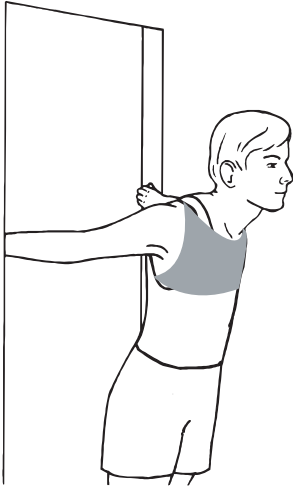
- Focus on any area that is particularly tight
- Focus on the muscles you are going to use or have used during your activity

For a quick and easy stretching routine see the pictures on the back of this fact sheet or check our stretching booklet for the following stretches:

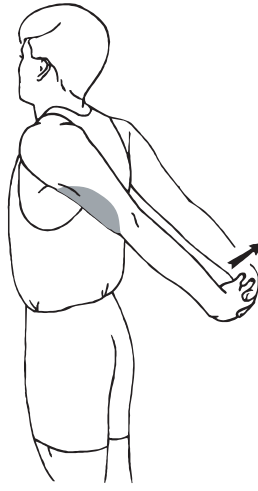
Chest: pecs	Legs: groin
Arms: Biceps	Legs: hamstrings
Arms: Triceps	Legs: quadriceps
Legs: calves	Back: lumbar extensors

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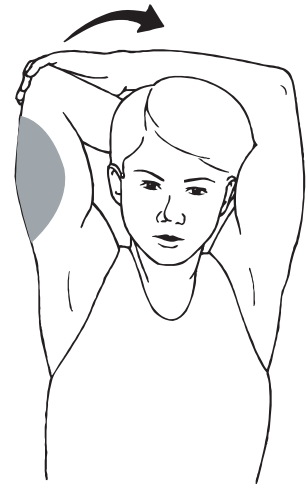
CHEST: PECES



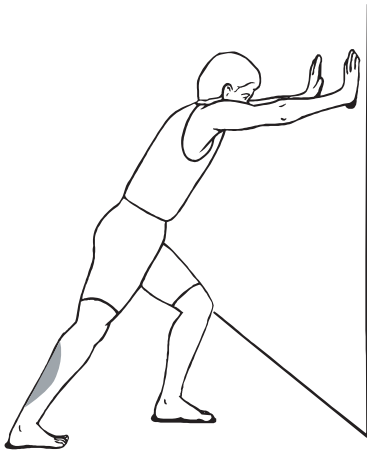
ARMS: BICEPS



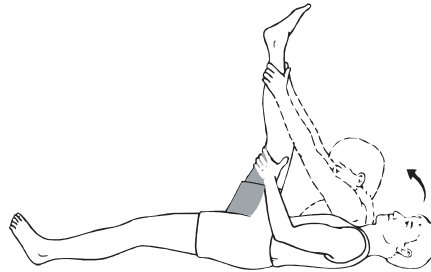
ARMS: TRICEPS



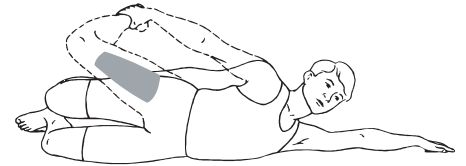
LEGS: CALVES



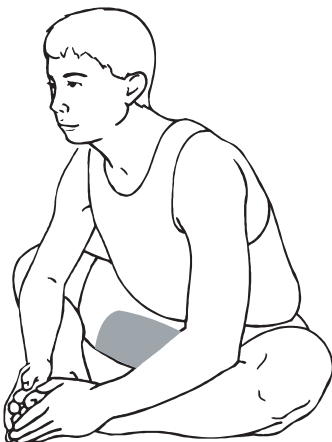
LEGS: GROIN



LEGS: QUADRICEPS



LEGS: HAMSTRINGS



BACK: LUMBAR EXTENSORS

