
STRETCH BEFORE STRAIN

STRETCHING GUIDELINES

- **WARM UP** Make sure muscles are appropriately warmed up before you stretch.
- **FOCUS ON MAJOR MUSCLE GROUPS** When you're stretching, focus on major muscle groups such as your calves, thighs, hips, lower back, neck and shoulders. Also stretch muscles and joints that you routinely use at work or play. Make sure that you stretch both sides. For instance, if you stretch your left hamstring, be sure to stretch your right hamstring, too.
- **DON'T BOUNCE** Stretch in a smooth movement, without bouncing. Bouncing as you stretch can cause injury to your muscle.
- **HOLD YOUR STRETCH** Hold stretches for 15-30 seconds. Stretch to the limit of movement, not the point of pain. The limit of movement is referred to as the “endpoint” of the stretch.
- **BREATHE** Keep your breathing slow and rhythmic while holding stretches. Exhale slowly as you extend to the endpoint of the stretch. As you exhale, the diaphragm and thoracic-cavity muscles are relaxing, thus promoting a more effective relaxation of the target muscles.
- **DON'T AIM FOR PAIN** Expect to feel tension while you're stretching, not pain. If it hurts, you've pushed too far. Back off to the point where you don't feel any pain, make sure the stretching technique is correct then hold the stretch. It may be necessary to try another position or a different stretching exercise (or method).
- **REPEAT THE STRETCH** 2-4 repetitions is optimal, as further repetitions do not provide additional benefits.



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- **MAKE STRETCHES SPORT SPECIFIC** Some evidence suggests that it's helpful to do stretches tailored for your work, sport or activity. If you play soccer, for instance, you're more vulnerable to hamstring strains. So opt for stretches that help your hamstrings.
- **BRING MOVEMENT INTO YOUR STRETCHING** Gentle movement can help you be more flexible in specific movements. The gentle movements of tai chi or yoga, for instance, may be a good way to stretch. And if you're going to perform a specific activity, such as a kick in martial arts or kicking a soccer ball, do the move slowly and at low intensity at first to get your muscles used to it. Then speed up gradually as your muscles.
- **KEEP UP WITH YOUR STRETCHING** Stretching can be time-consuming. But you can achieve the most benefits by stretching regularly, at least 2-3 times a week. Preferably 5-7 times a week. If you don't stretch regularly, you risk losing any benefits that stretching offered. For instance, if stretching helped you increase your range of motion, and you stop stretching, your range of motion may decrease again.

Source: Mayo Clinic & American College of Sport Medicine Guidelines

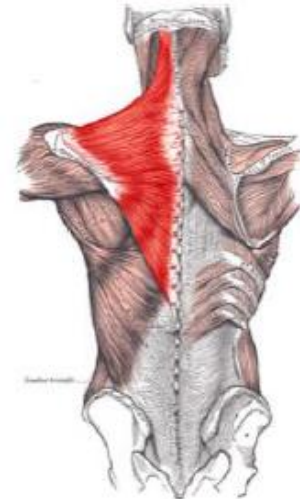
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SIMPLE STRETCHES

Source: Wellness council of Arizona (WELCOAZ)

1. Side Bending Neck Stretch

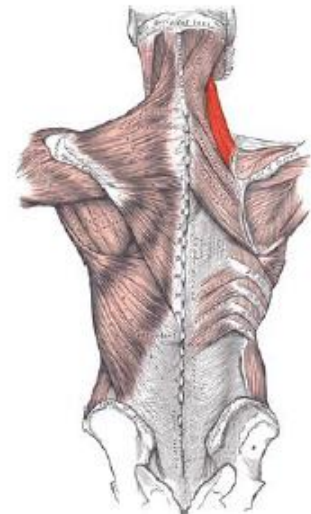
- In a standing position, with shoulders relaxed, reach right ear to right shoulder. Hold for 10-15 seconds then return head to a neutral position.
- Repeat 3-5 times on each side



Muscles stretched: *Upper Trapezius, Levator Scapulae*

2. Forward Rotation Neck Stretch

- In a standing position, place left hand behind neck. With shoulders relaxed, turn head 45 degrees to the right and tip head forward and down toward right hip. Hold for 15-30 seconds, then return to a neutral position.
- Repeat twice on each side



Muscles stretched: *Levator Scapulae*

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3. Neck Flexion

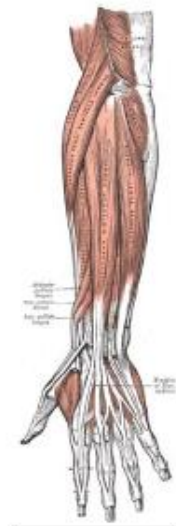
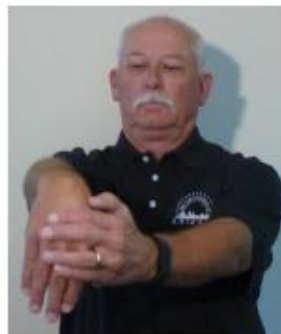
- In a standing position, with shoulders relaxed, tip head forward to chest. Hold for 10-20 seconds.
- Repeat 3-5 times



Muscles stretched: *Upper Trapezius*

4. Wrist Extension Stretch, Palms Away

- Extend left arm with palm facing down. Grasp fingers of left hand with right hand. Gently pull left hand towards body while keeping left arm straight. Hold for 15-30 seconds.
- Repeat 3-5 times on each side



Muscles stretched: *Extensors of the arms*

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5. Arm Across Chest Stretch

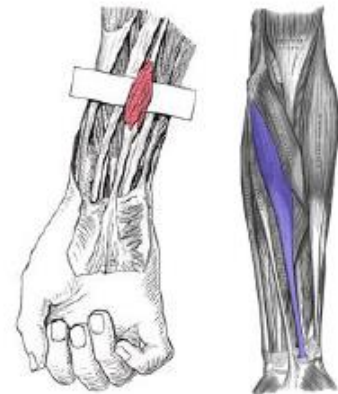
- Raise right arm to shoulder height. Grasp right elbow with left hand and pull arm across body. Hold for 20-30 seconds.
- Repeat 3-5 times on each side



Muscles stretched: *Deltoid*

6. Wrist Extension Stretch

- Extend left arm with palm facing away. Grasp fingers of left hand with right hand. Gently pull left hand towards body while keeping left arm straight. Hold for 20-30 seconds.
- Repeat 3-5 times on each side



Muscles stretched: *Palmaris Longus, Flexors of the arm*

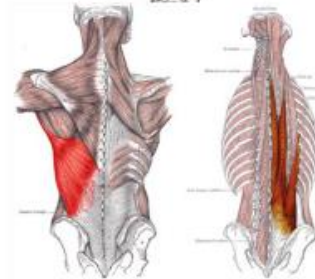
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7. Gluteus Stretch

- In a standing position lift left leg and bend knee towards chest. Hold for 15-30 seconds.
- Repeat 3-5 times on each leg



Muscles Stretched: *Gluteus Maximus, Erector Spinae, Lower Latissimus Dorsi*



8. Standing Quadriceps Stretch

- In a standing position bend left leg at knee and hold ankle or foot with left hand. Keep body and hips straight while pulling left heel towards buttocks. Hold for 15-30 seconds
- Repeat 3-5 times on each side



Muscles Stretched: *Quadriceps*

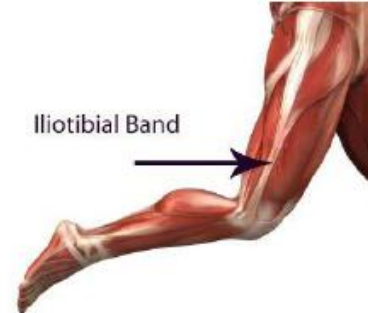


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9. IT Band Stretch

- In a standing position, cross right foot in front of left. Lean towards right side and hold for 15-30 seconds.
- Repeat 3-5 times on each side

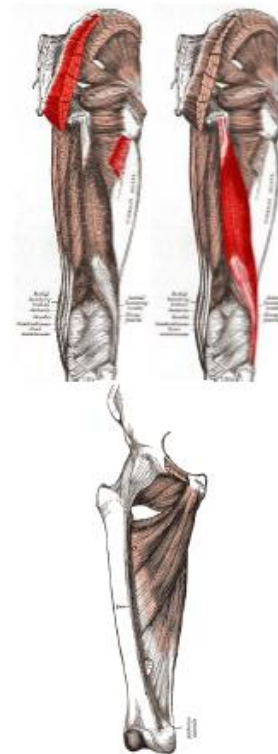
Muscles Stretched: *IT Band*



10. Standing Knee Flexor and Hip Adductor Stretch

- In a standing position with legs apart, bend trunk forward and reach arms behind knees. Hold for 15-30 seconds
- Repeat 3-5 times

Muscles Stretched: *Gluteus Maximus, Hamstrings, Adductors*



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11. Side Bend Stretch

- In a standing position reach right hand toward the right foot, making sure to not bend legs or let hips roll forwards or backwards. Hold for 15-30 seconds
- Repeat twice on each side



Muscles Stretched:

Internal/External Oblique



12. Standing Lower Trunk Flexor Stretch

- In a standing position with legs 2-3 feet apart and hands on hips, slowly arch back while pushing hips forward. Hold for 15-30 seconds



Muscles Stretched: *Rectus Abdominis, Internal/External Oblique*

