The Stretch Don’t Strain Program is an on-site 10-15 minute daily stretching routine. The stretches diagrammed can prepare the body for everyday work stresses. This is done by stretching and strengthening specific muscles commonly associated with strains, sprains and ergonomic injuries. If performed correctly and on a regular basis, these simple stretches may reduce the incidences of common muscle injuries.

Initially, your safety officer/coordinator should conduct an introduction to the program and overview of strains and sprains. Subsequently, a designated Trainer should then lead the daily stretching program, at the start of the shift, by using the examples provided.

**Stretching Guidelines**

- If you have questions about your ability to perform any stretch, consult your physician or Health Coach.
- Make sure muscles are appropriately warmed up before you stretch.
- Stretch at least 5–7 days per week and stretch all major muscle groups.
- Don’t bounce. Stretch in a smooth movement to avoid injury. Minimize movement of other body parts during stretching.
- Stretch to the limit of movement, not the point of pain.
- Keep your breathing slow and rhythmic while holding stretches.
- Stretch the muscles in various positions to improve range of motion.
- Maintain soft joints. Do not lock knees, elbows, etc.
**Neck**

**NECK ROTATION**
In a standing position, with shoulders relaxed, gently rotate head to the left. Do not rotate chin past shoulders. Return to center. Repeat 2-4 times on each side.

**LEVATOR SCAPULAE STRETCH**
While standing, raise right arm to your side, bending elbow so fingers point up and palm faces forward. Lift elbow slightly above shoulder. In this position, rest the elbow against a door jamb or other surface. This action rotates the outside of the shoulder blade up and the inside of it down. Next, turn the head to the left and bring the chin down, stretching the back of the neck. Hold this for about 30-60 seconds. Repeat on other side.

**NECK FLEXION**
In a standing position, with shoulders relaxed, tip head forward to chest. Hold for 10-20 seconds. Repeat 2-4 times.

**Upper Back/Shoulders**

**BEHIND THE BACK TORSO STRETCH**
Sit up tall and move your arms behind you. Try to interlace your fingers or touch your fingers behind you, while pushing out your chest with your chin angled upward toward the ceiling. Hold for 15 seconds, repeat 2-4 times.

**CORNER STRETCH**
Stand approximately two feet back from the inside corner of a room, facing into the corner. Feet should be together. Place forearms on each wall, with elbows a little below shoulder height. Lean in as far as possible without pain, to feel a stretch in your chest and front of shoulders. Hold the stretch for 30-60 seconds.

**Middle/Lower Back**

**TORSO STRETCH**
Seated or standing, lace the fingers together and stretch them up toward the ceiling. Take a deep breath as you stretch up as high as you can, then exhale and open the arms, sweeping them back down. Repeat 8-10 times.

**STANDING TRUNK EXTENSION STRETCH**
Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Place your hands in the small of your back for support. Slowly lean backward increasing the arch of your lower back until you feel a mild stretch in the abdominal muscles and slight pressure in the lower back. You can perform this as a static stretch by holding for 15-20 seconds, then repeating it 3-5 times.

Questions? Reach out to the Wellness Council of Arizona
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