



Tip#: You're Getting Warm!

Adapted from WELCOA

Simple stretching and warm-up routines

Every workout should begin with a brief warm-up and a few simple stretches. Walk around the house or in place for a few minutes to get your blood flowing before you attempt to stretch—never stretch cold muscles, you could risk tearing them. Below are a few stretches to follow before you get in full motion.

Hamstrings:

Sit on the floor with your upper body erect and both legs straight out in front of you. Slowly reach for your toes with both hands, leaning forward until you feel a slight discomfort.

Thighs:

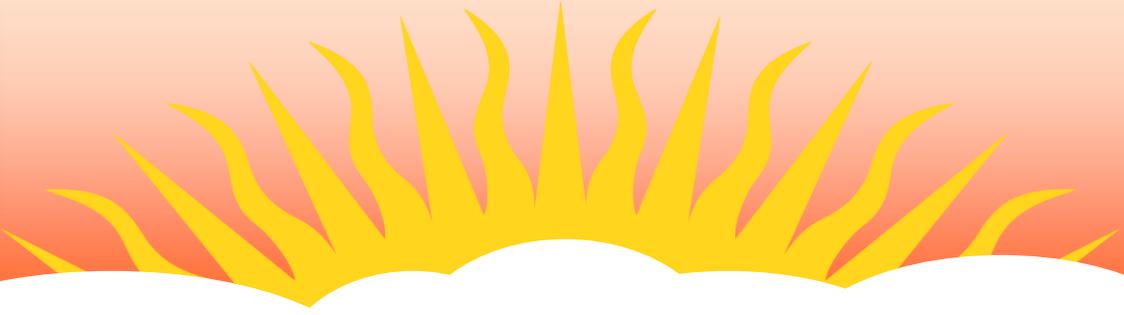
Stand with your left hand on a wall, for support. Bending your right knee, grab your right foot with your right hand and pull your foot up until you feel a slight discomfort in your thigh or your heel touches your buttocks.

Hips:

Lie flat on your back with your legs straight. Raise your right knee toward your chest. Place both hands below the knee and continue to pull your knee to your chest. For more stretches, check out the National Institutes on Aging's website at www.nih.gov/nia/health/pubs/nasa-exercise/.

After proper warm-up and stretching you are now ready to begin more rigorous physical activity. If you are walking, you may want to start your walk at a moderate pace before you work your way up to quicker strides. And remember to end your exercise routine with an appropriate cool down. If you walking, you may want to slow down the pace toward the end of your walk and repeat the stretches you did to warm-up.





Take a Be-Well Break Today!

Even just 30 seconds can make a big difference to your energy level and to how well your body functions. When working at a computer, you should at least look away from your screen for 10 seconds every half an hour, though more often will further reduce eye strain. Take a minute every hour or two and stand up, stretch and take a deep breath. Here are ideas to break up the day:

Shoulder Roll: Roll both shoulders up, back, down and around in a wide circular motion. Repeat several times, and then roll your shoulders in a wide circular motion to the front.

Elbow Press: Hold your arms out in front of you at shoulder height, palms facing down. Bring your elbows back while keeping your arms parallel to the floor. Hold for a few seconds and repeat.

Cat Stretch: Stand or sit with your arms outstretched in front of you. Interlock your fingers, palms facing your chest. Gently push your hands away from your body, allowing your shoulders to round and your back to arch. Hold for five seconds and release. Repeat 3 to 4 times.

Palm Massage: Lace your fingers together, leaving thumbs free. Slowly knead your left thumb into the palm of your right hand. Continue for 20 seconds, and then repeat on your left hand.

Scalp Soother: Place thumbs behind your ears and spread your fingers on top of your head. Move your scalp back and forth slightly by making circles with your fingertips for 20 seconds.



This Week's Challenge

Take 10 minutes to do some dynamic stretches in the morning before beginning your day.

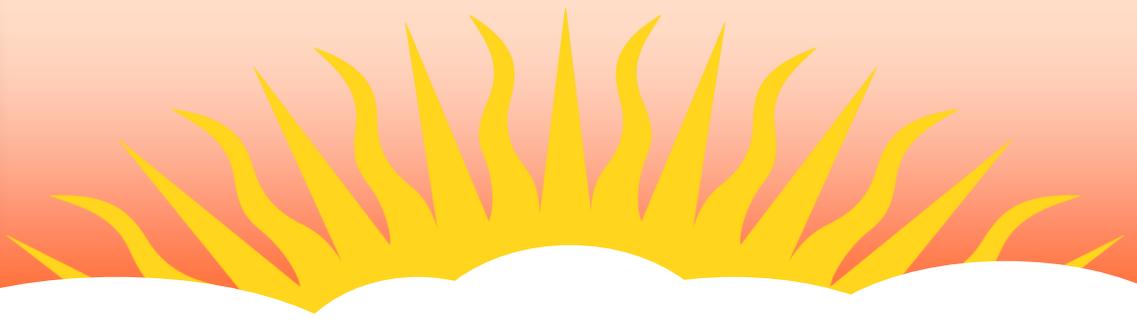


Upper Body Stretch: Sitting or standing up tall, extend both arms upwards, keeping your shoulders away from your ears. Hold for several seconds, then drop your right arm and gently reach your left arm to the right. Hold for several seconds then repeat with your right arm reaching.

Head/Neck Stretch: Slowly drop your head forward then gently return to an upright position. Then drop your head to the left, then to the right. Repeat each direction three times. With your chin down, make small rotations with your head to the left and right.

Wrist Rotations: Curl fingers into loose fists and roll fists around in a circle. Repeat continuously for a few seconds, and then circle in the other direction.





Hand Stretch: Hold one arm out in front of you and bend your palm and fingers up. Use your opposite hand to apply gentle pressure until you feel the stretch. Hold for ten seconds. Then move your hands and fingers down and hold for ten seconds. Repeat on the other side.

Low Back Stretch: Sit or stand up tall. Leading with your chest, turn your torso over to the right, using your hands on your hips or on the side of your chair to gently stretch your low back. Hold for ten seconds then repeat on the other side.

Chest Stretch: Raise your arms to shoulder height with palms facing forward. Gently squeeze your shoulder blades together and open your arm wider. Hold for ten seconds.

Cross Shoulder Stretch: Extend your right arm in front of you, then across your chest. Place your left arm just below the elbow of your right arm and gently hug your arm towards you. Hold for ten seconds then repeat with your left arm.

Shoulder Shrug: Relax your shoulders with your arms at your sides. Look straight ahead. Lift your shoulders up toward your ears and hold for a few seconds. Then exhale and let your shoulders and arms drop down. Repeat three times.

