

A Quick and Easy *Stretching Routine*

Did you know about the benefits of stretching? With a very minimal time commitment, you will find that stretching offers you reduced muscle tension, increased energy levels and an increased range of movement in the joints. Most importantly, though, stretching feels great! It also functions as a good relaxer and stress reliever.

Chest Stretch.

In a seated or standing position, hold a band with a wide grip over the head. Move your arms back slightly as you lower them down, stretching the chest. Hold for 10 - 30 seconds. (Avoid this stretch if you have shoulder problems.)



Shoulder Shrugs.

In a seated or standing position, lift the shoulders up towards the ears, squeezing them as hard as you can. Hold this position for 1-2 seconds, then roll your shoulders back as you relax down. Repeat 5-10 times.



Head Tilt.

In a seated or standing position, gently tilt your head toward your right shoulder and hold for 10 seconds. Return to the starting position, tilt your head toward the left shoulder and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat this stretch 3-5 times on each side.



Lower Back Stretch.

Begin by standing with your feet hip-width apart. Your legs should be straight, with your arms at your sides. Next, slowly lean forward and down toward the floor, allowing your arms to hang by your head. Relax and stay in this position for 5-10 seconds before rolling up slowly back to the starting position. Repeat this stretch 3-5 times.



Seated Twist.

In a seated position with your feet flat on the floor, contract your abs and gently twist your torso to the right. Use your hands to help deepen the stretch. Only twist as far as you comfortably can. Keep your back straight while keeping the hips square. Hold this stretch for 10-30 seconds and repeat on the other side.



Torso Stretch.

In a seated or standing position, interlace your 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 this stretch 8-10 times.



Wrist Flexion.

In a seated or standing position, stretch your right arm out, turning your hand down so that your fingers point towards the floor. Use your left hand to gently pull your fingers towards you, creating a stretch in the forearm. Hold for 10-30 seconds and repeat on your other hand. Another variation on this stretch is turning the hand so your fingers are pointed up toward the ceiling.



Hip Flexion.

Begin by standing with your right foot forward and left foot behind you. There should be about 18 inches distance between your feet. Place your hands on your hips. Tuck your tailbone under and gently push your hips forward. Hold this stretch for 10-15 seconds before switching to the other leg. Avoid over-arching your lower back.

