

SPINAL STRETCHING

Use these stretches to fine-tune your muscles. This is a general routine that emphasises stretching and relaxing the muscles most frequently used during normal day-to-day activities.

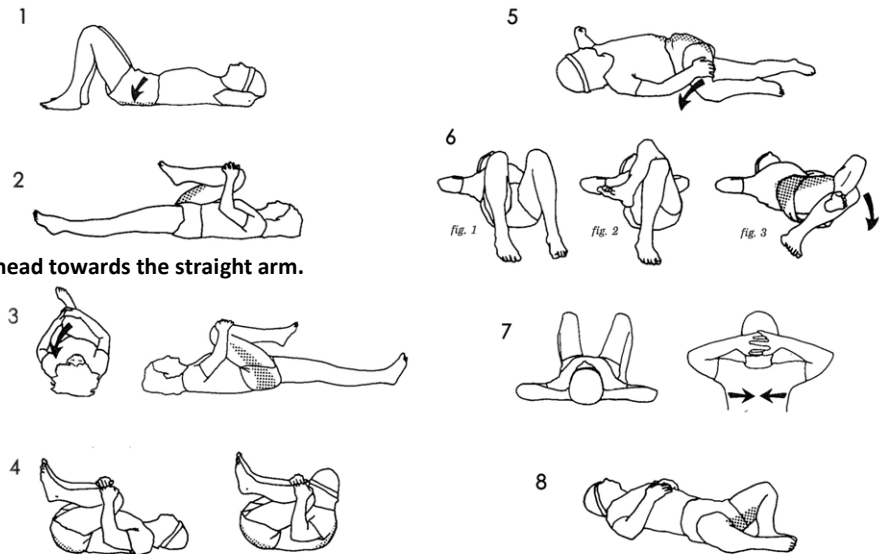
In the simple tasks of everyday living, we often use our body in strained or awkward ways, creating stress and tension. A kind of muscular rigor mortis sets in. If you can set aside a minimum of 10 minutes every day for stretching, you will offset this accumulated tension so you can use your body with greater ease.

Stretching should be done slowly without bouncing. Preferably, after a warm up or a warm bath with magnesium salts. Hold each stretch for a minimum of 30 seconds while increasing the tension slowly. Hold only stretch tension that is comfortable to you and stop if it feels too painful. Do each stretch 2-3 times.

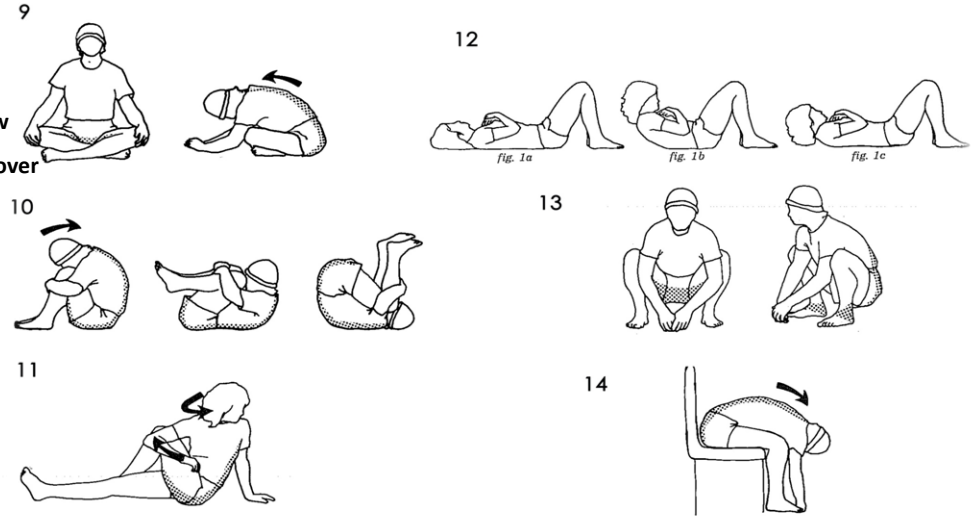
The key to stretching is to be relaxed. Breathe deeply and slowly while concentrating on the area being stretched. Regular stretching retrains your muscles and ligaments to better flexibility and movement.

LOWER BACK STRETCHES

1. The Rest Position: Rest on your back with knees bent and fingers interlaced behind your head.
2. Pull your knees one at a time to your chest.
3. Pull your knees one at a time diagonally towards the opposite shoulder.
4. Pull both legs to your chest with head on the floor and then curl head towards knees.
5. With one knee bent to 90 degrees, pull that leg with your opposite hand to the floor while turning your head towards the straight arm.
6. With one leg crossed over the other, pull down on the lower leg towards the floor.
7. With fingers interlaced behind the head, pull your shoulder blades together.
8. Relax with both knees bent and the soles of your feet together while gravity stretches the groin.

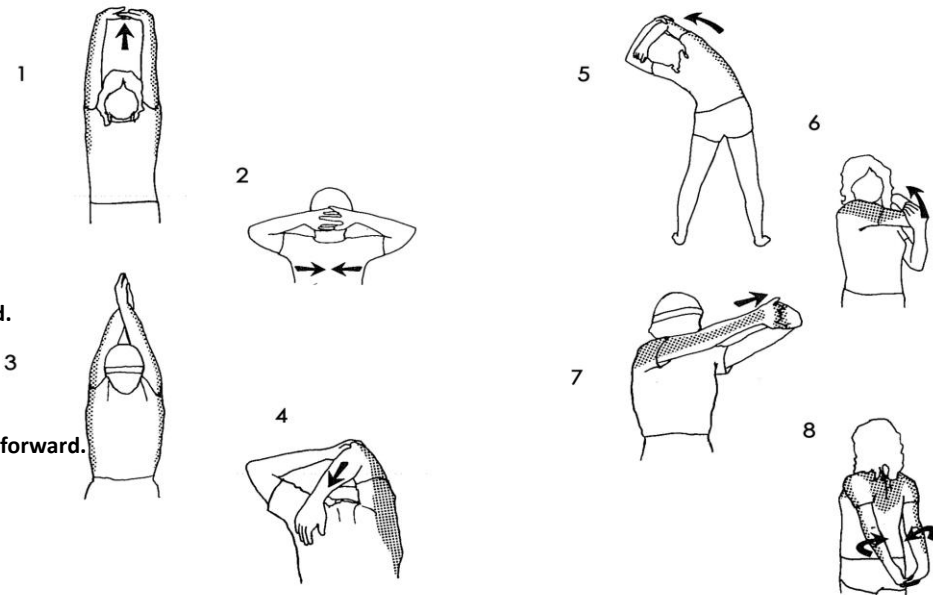


9. Sit cross legged and lean forwards until you feel a comfortable stretch. Hold and relax.
10. While sitting pull your knees and chin to your chest and then roll up and down your spine on a mat.
11. The Spinal Twist: Sit with one leg straight while crossing the other leg over. Pull across with the elbow of the opposite arm on the outside of the bent leg. Turn your head in the opposite direction to look over the shoulder of the straight arm resting behind you. Do both sides while gently breathing.
12. AB Curls: Curl up your upper body bringing your shoulder blades of the floor by about 30 degrees. Keep your chin close to your chest all the time while doing 5-15 curls at a medium speed.
13. The Squat: Squat down with feet comfortably apart and toes pointing out. Keep your knees outside your shoulders and directly above the big toes. To gain more balance try this stretch while leaning your back against a wall or while holding onto a stationary object with your hands.
14. While sitting lean forward to stretch and take the pressure off your lower back.

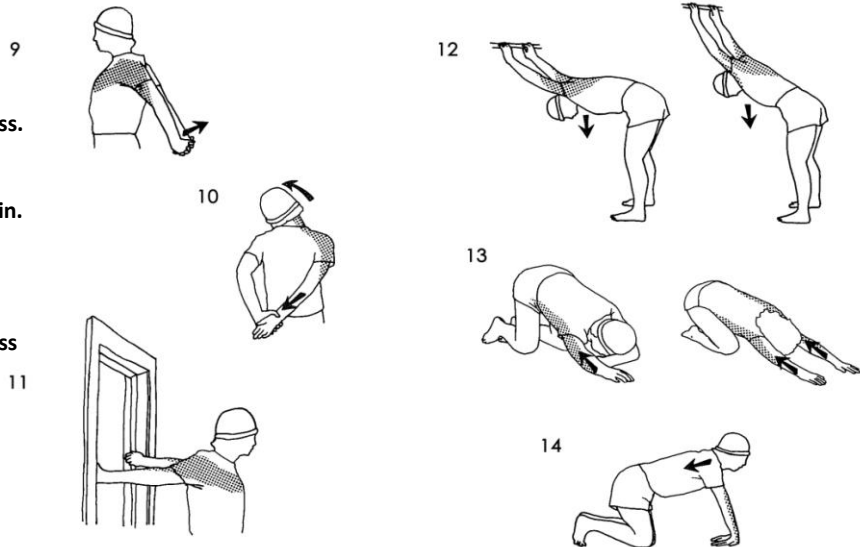


NECK AND UPPER BACK STRETCHES

1. Heavenly Lift: While sitting or standing, interlace your fingers and reach high above your head. With your palms facing upwards, push your arms slightly back and up.
2. Shoulder Blade Pinch: Pull your shoulder blades together while lightly pushing back with your head to create tension in between your shoulder blades in the upper back area.
3. With arms extended overhead and palms together stretch arms upwards and backwards.
4. With arms overhead, hold the elbow with the other hand and gently pull down behind your head.
5. Gently pull your elbow behind your head as you bend from your hips to the side. Do both sides.
6. Gently pull your elbow across your chest towards the opposite shoulder.
7. Interlace your fingers in front of you while turning your palms outward as you extend your arms forward.
8. Slowly turn your elbows inward while straightening your arms behind your back.



9. Lift your arms up behind you until you feel the stretch. Keep your chest out and chin in.
10. Lean your head sideways toward the opposite shoulder while pulling with your arm down and across.
11. Hold both sides of the door way with your hands at about shoulder level.
Let your arms straighten as you lean forward. Hold your chest out and up while your chin is tucked in.
12. Place both hands shoulder width apart on a ledge and let your upper body drop down as you keep your knees slightly bent.
13. Child Pose: With legs bent under you, reach forward and pull back with straight arms while you press down with your palms and flatten your upper back. Do both or one arm at a time.
14. Forearm and wrist stretch: While on all fours, support yourself on your hands and knees. Lean back to stretch the front part of your forearms.



POSTURE- "Watch your Posture, Others Do!"

Apart from stretching good posture is crucial to spinal health. Your body is designed for 3D movement, so prolonged sitting is counterproductive. "Sitting is the new smoking". Researchers have found and continue to find evidence that prolonged sitting increases the risk of developing several serious illnesses like various types of cancer, heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

When sitting, however, make sure you sit all the way to the back of the chair. A Lumber support cushion may help with your posture. When sitting for a prolonged period of time make sure you frequently get up and move around. Stand up, Stretch and go for a walk once every hour or so! (see computer and desk stretches).

When in bed good posture is maintained by sleeping on a firm mattress (medium firmness) that allows for your body contours to comfortably sink into it. A therapeutically contoured pillow that props up your shoulders and keeps your neck in a neutral alignment is ideal for side sleepers. A slightly lower pillow can be used for back sleepers. Sleeping on your stomach is not ideal for your neck or lower back.

Computer & Desk Stretches

