

STRETCHING EXERCISES



Physical Activity Resource Center for Public Health

PARC-PH

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Safety Information

Regular physical activity is fun and healthy. Being more active is very safe for most people. However, some people should check with their doctor or health care provider before they start becoming much more physically active.

If you are planning to become more physically active than you are now, you should check with your physician before you start. You may be able to do any activity that you want – as long as you start slowly and build up gradually. Or, you may need to restrict your activities to those that are safe for you. Before you begin your “active life”, talk with your doctor or health care provider about the kinds of activities that you wish to participate in and follow his/her advice.

Stretching

Stretching is a form of exercise that targets muscles by elongating them to their fullest length. Stretching is often a neglected portion of many individuals exercise programs. It is important to remember that stretching offers benefits that are important and thus deserving of attention in addition to aerobic and strength training exercises. Stretching should be incorporated into both the warm-up and cool-down of aerobic and strengthening exercises. A stretching routine can also be performed by itself.

Benefits of Stretching

- Improves range of motion
- Improves performance of many activities including aerobic exercises
- Prevention of injuries
- Enhance muscle tone
- Decrease muscle soreness associated with exercise
- Prepares muscles for activity

Safety Considerations Before and During Exercise

- Warm-up your muscles before you start stretching (e.g. walking in place)
- Wear comfortable clothing (clothing should not limit movement)
- Stretch to a point of discomfort, not pain.
- No bouncing
- Hold stretches for 10-30 seconds
- Shake out limbs between stretches
- Repeat each stretch 2-3 times

STRETCHING

exercises and instructions

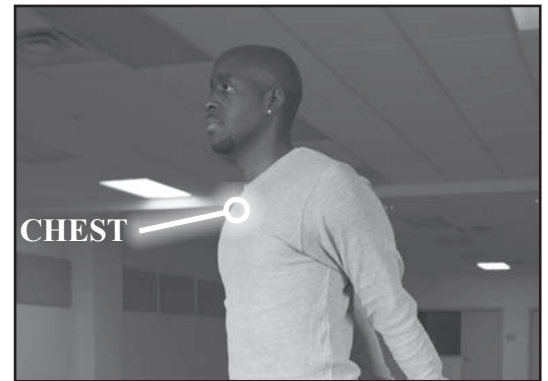
CHEST STRETCH

This exercise targets the chest.



Important Note: NEVER hold a painful stretch. Hold your stretches, NEVER bounce. Exercise should be repeated 2-3 times.

MUSCLES USED



Performing this Exercise

- Stand comfortably with feet shoulder width apart with your knees slightly bent
- Clasp your hands together behind your back with your palms facing in
- Slowly straighten your arms out behind you. If you cannot touch your hands behind your back, use a towel and grab with both hands.
- Hold each stretch 10-30 seconds



WAIST BENDS

This exercise targets the abdominal and upper latissimus (back) muscles.



Important Note: NEVER hold a painful stretch. Hold your stretches, NEVER bounce. Exercise should be repeated 2-3 times.

MUSCLES USED



P e r f o r m i n g t h i s E x e r c i s e

- Stand comfortably with feet about shoulder width apart with knees slightly bent
- Place one hand on your hip to support yourself (Avoid applying too much pressure to your hip with this hand. You do not want to push your hip in the opposite direction of your overhead hand)
- Reach the opposite arm towards the ceiling with full extension
- Then reach slightly across your body over head
- Hold each stretch 10-30 seconds



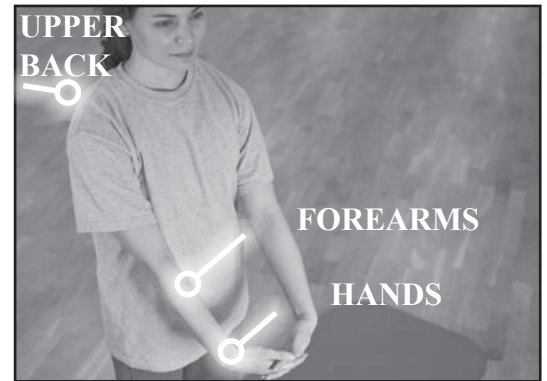
BACK STRETCH

This exercise targets your upper back, your hands, and forearms.



Important Note: NEVER hold a painful stretch. Hold your stretches, NEVER bounce. Exercise should be repeated 2-3 times.

MUSCLES USED



P e r f o r m i n g t h i s E x e r c i s e

- Stand comfortably with feet shoulder width apart and knees slightly bent
- Clasp your hands in front of you with palms facing out
- Fully extend your arms out in front of you with your hands still clasped together
- Hold each stretch 10-30 seconds



SHOULDER STRETCH

This exercise targets the shoulders.



Important Note: NEVER hold a painful stretch. Hold your stretches, NEVER bounce. Exercise should be repeated 2-3 times.

MUSCLES USED



P e r f o r m i n g t h i s E x e r c i s e

- Stand comfortably with feet shoulder width apart with knees slightly bent
- Gently pull your arm across your chest holding it with your opposite hand
- Hold each stretch 10-30 seconds



ARM CIRCLES

This muscle targets the shoulders.



Important Note: Exercise should be performed with slow and controlled movements. Stop if you feel pain. Gradually increase the number of circles over time. Exercise should be repeated 2-3 times. (Resting between sets)

MUSCLES USED



P e r f o r m i n g t h i s E x e r c i s e

- Stand comfortably with feet shoulder width apart and knees slightly bent
- Extend your arms straight out to your sides (forming a “T” shape or cross) with your palms facing the ground.
- Rotate your arms forward in small circles 10 times followed by 10 small circles in the opposite direction



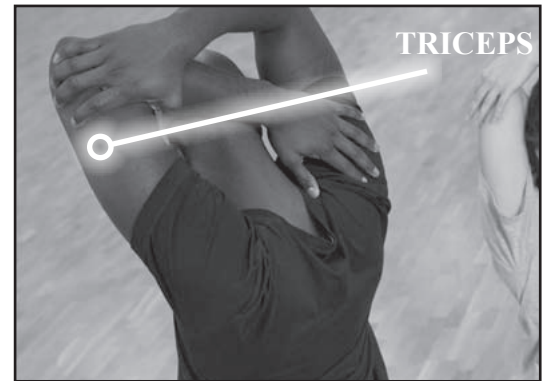
TRICEPS STRETCH

This exercise targets the triceps (back of your arm).



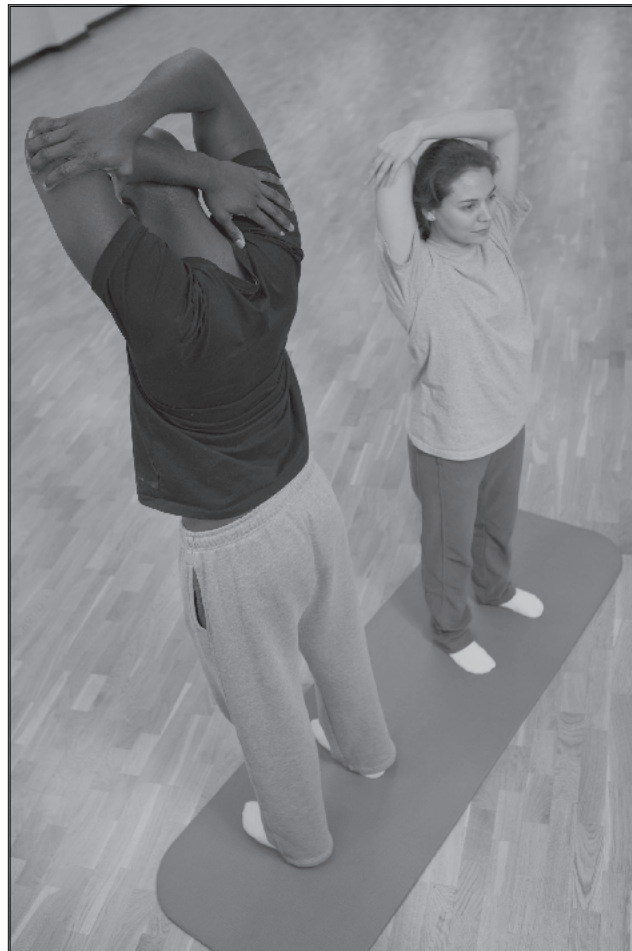
Important Note: NEVER hold a painful stretch. Hold your stretches, NEVER bounce. Repeat the exercise with both arms. Exercise should be repeated 2-3 times.

MUSCLES USED



P e r f o r m i n g t h i s E x e r c i s e

- Stand comfortably with feet shoulder width apart with knees slightly bent
- Extend arms overhead
- Hold elbow overhead with opposite arm.
- Gently pull your elbow behind your head
- Hold each stretch 10-30 seconds



BICEPS STRETCH

This exercise targets the biceps (front of the arm).



Important Note: NEVER hold a painful stretch. Hold your stretches, NEVER bounce. Repeat the exercise with both arms. Exercise should be repeated 2-3 times

MUSCLES USED



P e r f o r m i n g t h i s E x e r c i s e

- Stand comfortably with feet shoulder width apart and your knees slightly bent
- Fully extend one of your arms in front of you with your palm facing up
- Keeping your arm fully extended, gently pull back your hand until your palms are facing out or forward
- Hold each stretch 10-30 seconds



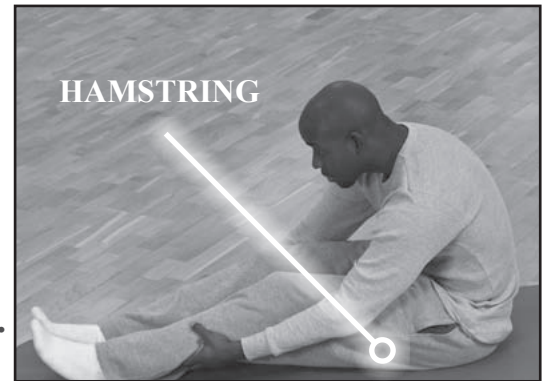
SITTING TOE TOUCH

This exercise targets the lower back and hamstring (back of the leg).



Important Note: NEVER hold a painful stretch. Hold your stretches, NEVER bounce. If stretch is too difficult, bend your legs more. If you cannot reach your toes, extend until you reach your calves. Slowly progress over time until you can reach your toes. Exercise should be repeated 2-3 times.

MUSCLES USED



P e r f o r m i n g t h i s E x e r c i s e

- Sit on the floor with your legs slightly bent and your feet directly in front of you
- Reach out your hands slowly toward your toes (Begin by bending at your waist and avoiding rounding of your upper back)
- Hold each stretch 10-30 seconds



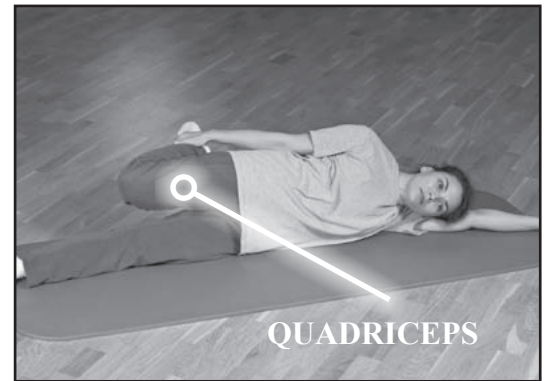
QUADRICEPS STRETCH

This exercise targets the quadriceps (Front of the leg).



Important Note: NEVER hold a stretch through pain. Hold your stretches, NEVER bounce. Perform the stretch on both legs. Exercise should be repeated 2-3 times.

MUSCLES USED



P e r f o r m i n g t h i s E x e r c i s e

- Lay on your side on a comfortable surface
- Bend your top leg behind you
- Gently pull your ankle behind you with your hand (Make sure the upper portion of the leg (thigh) you are stretching remains parallel to the bottom straight leg)
- Hold each stretch 10-30 seconds



CALF STRETCH

This exercise targets the calf (back of your lower leg).



Important Note: NEVER hold a stretch through pain. Hold your stretches, NEVER bounce. Perform the stretch on both legs. Exercise should be repeated 2-3 times.

MUSCLES USED



P e r f o r m i n g t h i s E x e r c i s e

- Stand comfortably with feet shoulder width apart
- Step forward with your leg approximately 1 foot. Your front knee should be in line with your front toes. Your back leg should be straight.
- Lean forward slightly, keeping the back leg straight and the back foot firmly on the ground
- Hold each stretch 10-30 seconds.



The contents of this packet were developed by the following individuals:

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