

Core Stretches

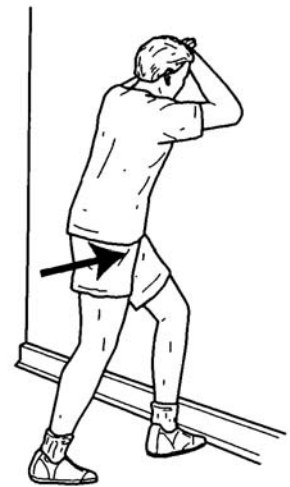
Warm up:

- Warm up can include activities such as: walking around the room, stepping side to side, riding a bike for 5 minutes, or walking on the treadmill for 5 minutes.
- **Stretch only warm muscles. Warm up first. Hold each stretch 30 - 60 seconds. Watch your back!**

Lower body stretches (standing):

☐ Calf muscle

1. Stand facing a wall or an exercise bar.
2. Move your right foot back, keeping your leg straight.
3. Move your left foot forward with the knee bent. Make sure your knee is in line with your ankle.
4. Press your heel of your right foot into the floor.
5. You should feel this stretch up the back of your lower leg, from your heel up to the back of your knee.
6. Repeat with the left leg back and right leg forward to stretch the calf muscle.



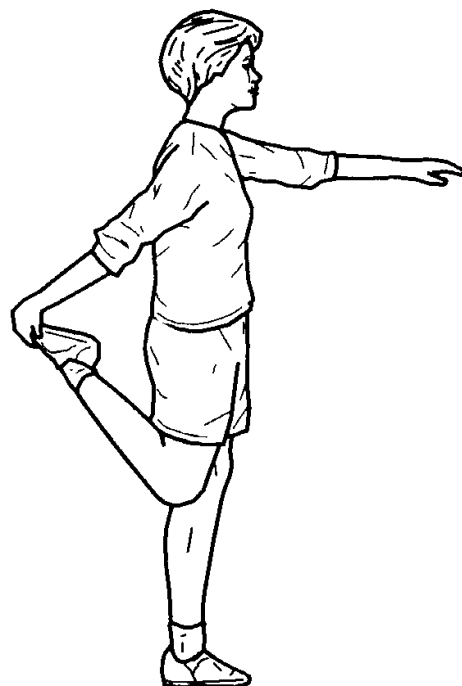
☐ Hamstring

1. Stand facing a wall or an exercise bar.
2. Bring your right foot forward.
3. Bend both knees.
4. Place the heel of your right foot on the floor with your toes raised up to the ceiling. This knee should be only slightly bent.
5. Put your weight back by sticking your behind out.
6. You should feel this stretch up the back of your upper leg from the back of your knee up to your Gluteus Maximus (your behind).
7. Make sure that your hips are facing the wall. One hip should not be in front of or behind the other hip.
8. Repeat with the left leg forward to stretch the left hamstring.



☐ Quadriceps

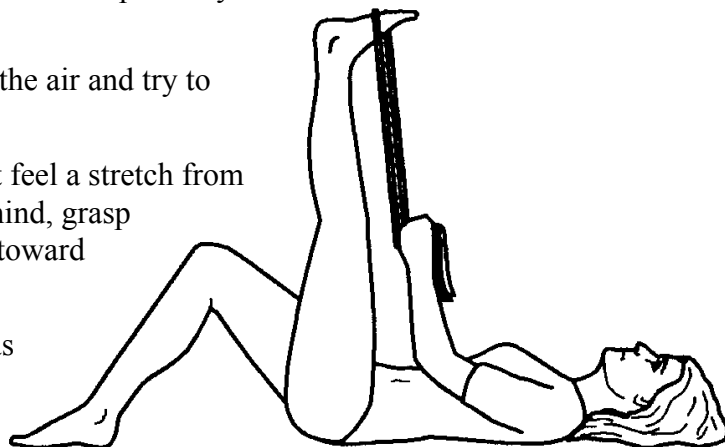
1. Stand facing a wall or an exercise bar.
2. Raise your right heel up in back toward your behind.
3. If possible, grab your right ankle with your right hand or grab slightly above your ankle and hold your leg up to your behind.
4. Make sure that your right leg is beside your left leg and not in front of it.
5. Make sure that your hips are facing the wall and the low back is not arched.
6. You should feel this stretch up the front of your upper leg (thigh) from your knee all the way up the front of your thigh.
7. Repeat with the left leg to stretch your left quadriceps grabbing your left leg with your left hand.



Lower leg stretches (floor):

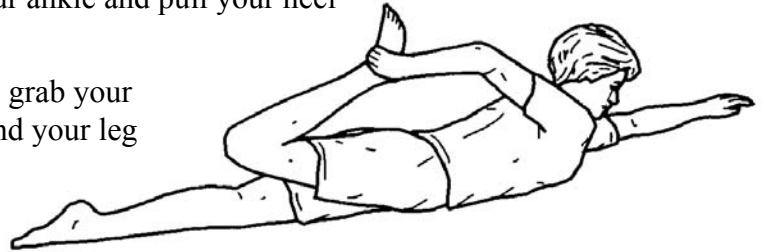
☐ Hamstring and calf stretch

1. Lie on the floor with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
2. Your back should be pressed into the floor to protect your lower back.
3. Bring your right leg straight up into the air and try to straighten your leg.
4. If you straighten your leg and do not feel a stretch from the back of your knee up to your behind, grasp your leg behind the knee and pull it toward your body.
5. You must keep your leg as straight as possible to feel this stretch.
6. Relax your leg, but keep it in the air.
7. Point your toe then flatten out your foot and hold this position for 30 - 60 seconds. This position will give you a calf stretch.
8. Return your right foot to the floor keeping your knee bent and your back pressed to the floor.
9. Repeat this series of steps with your left leg to stretch your left hamstring and calf muscle.



☐ Quadriceps

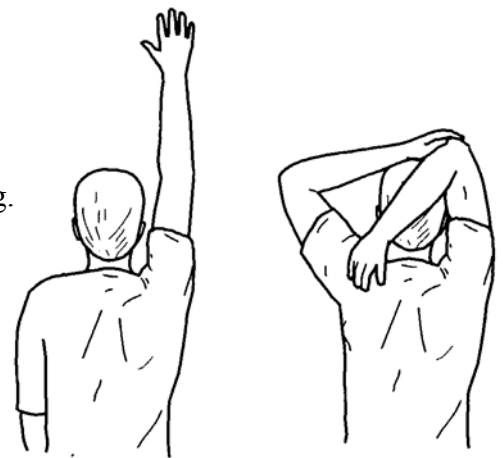
1. Lie flat on your stomach and bring your heel up to your behind.
2. Grab your ankle or slightly above your ankle and pull your heel to your behind.
3. If you are unable to reach your ankle, grab your pants leg or use a towel to wrap around your leg to pull your heel toward your behind.
4. **Do not** twist your back. Keep both of your hips on the floor.
5. Repeat with your left leg to stretch your left quadriceps.



Upper body stretches (standing):

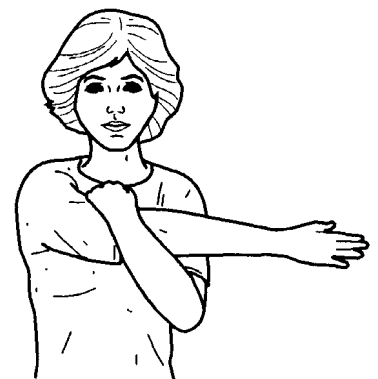
☐ Side stretch and triceps stretch

1. Stand facing a mirror.
2. Raise your right arm into the air and reach for the ceiling.
3. You should feel a good stretch all through your side.
4. Drop your hand behind your head reaching across the body toward the opposite shoulder blade.
5. Reach up with your other hand and gently pull your elbow toward your back.
6. If you cannot reach to pull your elbow back from behind your head, gently push your elbow back by placing your hand on the front of your arm and push back.
7. You should feel this stretch in the back of your upper arm (triceps).
8. Repeat with your left arm for a stretch in the left side and left triceps.



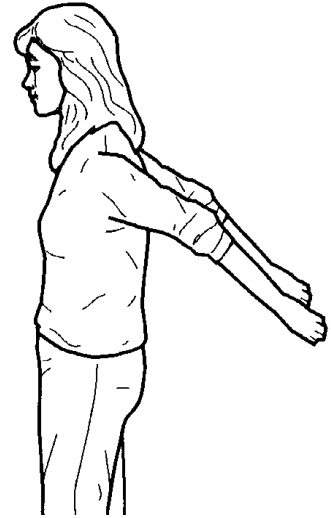
☐ Posterior deltoid (back of shoulder):

1. Stand facing a mirror.
2. Extend your right arm out to the side, at shoulder height.
3. Bring your right arm across your chest.
4. Place your left hand on your right elbow or upper arm and pull your right arm close to your chest.
5. You should feel this stretch in the back of your shoulder (posterior deltoid).
6. Repeat with the left arm.



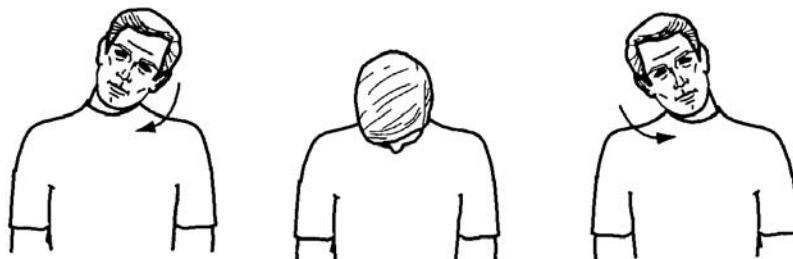
☐ **Anterior deltoid (front of shoulder) and pectoralis major (chest):**

1. Stand facing a mirror.
2. Stand straight with your chest and head up.
3. Roll your shoulders back, opening up your chest.
4. Extend your arms back beyond your body.
5. If you can, clasp your fingers together behind your back and raise your arms up in the air behind your back.
6. **Do not** lean forward. Stay in a straight position.
7. You should feel this stretch in the front of your shoulder (anterior deltoid) and the front of your chest (pectoralis major).



☐ **Neck**

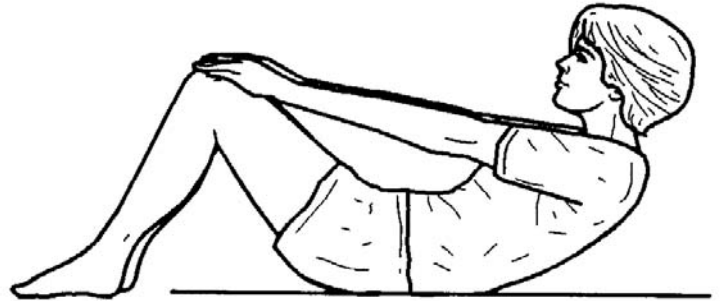
1. Stand facing a mirror.
2. Press your chin into the chest. You should feel a stretch up the back of the neck.
3. Return to looking straight ahead.
4. Press your right ear to the right shoulder. **Do not** raise your shoulder up to the ear.
5. Return to looking straight ahead.
6. Press your left ear to the left shoulder. **Do not** raise your shoulder up to the ear.
7. Return to looking straight ahead.
8. Turn your head to the right as far as you can for a good stretch.
9. Return to looking straight ahead.
10. Turn your head to the left as far as you can for a good stretch.
11. Return to looking straight ahead.



Upper body stretches (lying):

❑ Crunches

1. Lie on your back on the floor with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor and your low back pressed into the floor.
2. Place your hands on your thighs. Reach your hands up and touch your knees. Blow air out and pull in your stomach muscles as you reach for your knees. **Keep your lower back pressed into the floor throughout this motion.**
3. While you are reaching for your knees, your shoulders and head should come off the floor.
4. Your chin should not be on your chest. There should be a space big enough for a fist between your chin and chest.
5. Repeat until it is difficult to continue.

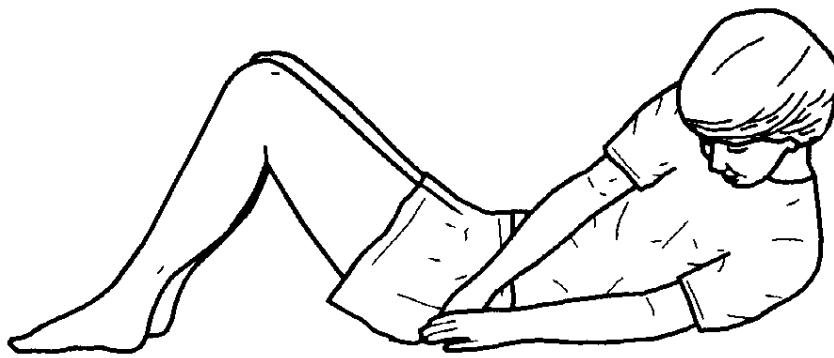


Note:

- If reaching for your knees is too easy, place your arms across your chest. Make sure that you are getting your shoulders off the floor.
- If crossing your arms on your chest is still too easy, bring your fingertips to your ears with your elbows flat beside your head.
- **Do not** pull on your neck. Keep that space between your chin and chest. It is not important to touch your elbows to your knees. Rounding your shoulders off the floor to shorten your abdominal muscles is the right idea. This is not a full sit up!

❑ Obliques (Sides):

1. Lie on your back on the floor with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor and your back pressed into the floor.
2. Extend your arms with your hands together out to the right side of your body. Your right arm is reaching straight out and your left arm comes across your body to join your right arm.
3. Reach across yourself to your left knee.
4. Twist your upper body while you reach across.
5. **Your lower body should be pressed into the floor.**



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