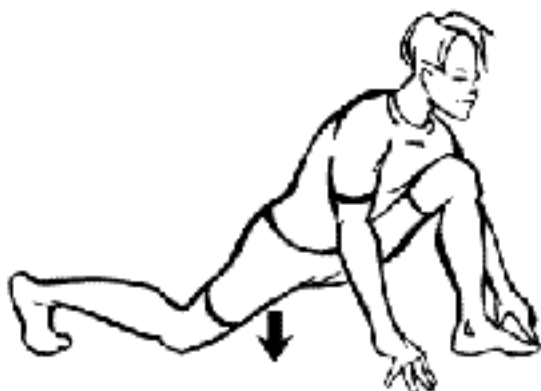


# Stretching Exercises

Here are some examples of stretches for most of the major muscle groups. Remember, before you start any stretching routine you need to warm up your muscles. This warm up can be as simple as a quick walk around the block or 15 minutes of marching in place. You risk injury if you try to stretch "cold" muscles.



## Hip flexor Stretch

- Make sure your forward leg is directly over your ankle.
- The other knee should be resting against the floor.
- Without moving the forward leg, or shifting the position of the knee on the floor, lower the front of your hip toward the floor.
- Don't let your knee pass over the top of your foot.

## Groin Stretch

- With the soles of your feet pressed together, gently hold your ankles.
- Now, pull yourself forward bending from the hip.
- Do not bend forward from the head and shoulders.



## Lower Back Stretch

- While sitting with your right leg extended, bend the left leg to cross over the right.
- Rest your right elbow on the outside of the left leg just above the knee.
- Turn your head to look over your left shoulder while pressing gently against the left leg with your right elbow.
- At the same time, rotate your body toward your supporting left arm.

## More Lower Back

- Tense buttocks as you tighten your abdominals to flatten your back against the floor.
- Hold for 5 seconds and repeat, concentrating on holding the muscle contraction.





### **Hip Stretches**

- Pull one leg toward your chest and hold for 20 seconds.
- Repeat for the other leg.

### **More Hip Stretches**

- Bend your knee to 90 degrees and with the opposite hand pull that leg up and over the other leg.
- Turn your head in the opposite direction, looking at your outstretched arm.
- Hold for 20 seconds, then repeat with the other leg.
- Be sure to keep your shoulders on the floor. Keep feet and ankles relaxed.

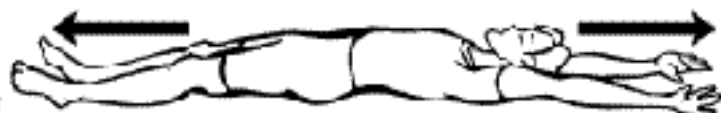


### **Yet Another Hip Stretch**

- Bend your left leg over your bent right leg.
- Use the left leg as resistance while you push against it with your right leg.
- Hold for 30 seconds then repeat on the other side.
- Make sure to keep your shoulders flat against the floor.

### **Full Body Stretch**

- Stretch your arms over your head and straighten your legs.
- Reach out as far as you can with both arms and legs, lengthening your body.
- Do this twice; holding for 5 seconds each time.



### **Hamstring Stretch**

- Stand with feet shoulder width apart.
- Bend forward from the hips.
- Keep knees slightly bent and let arms and neck relax. Dangle your hands at your feet.
- Do not bounce.

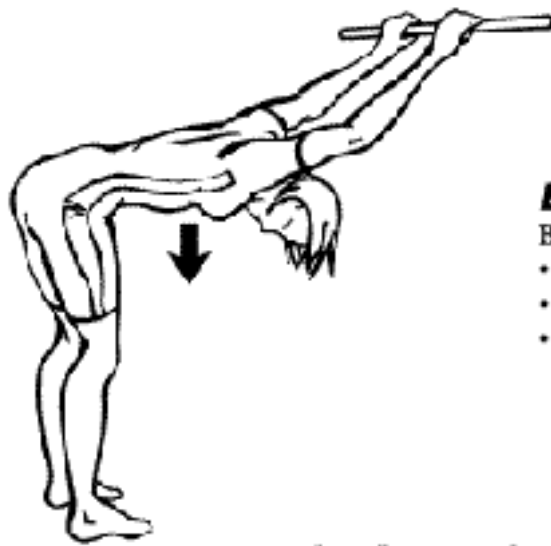


### **Quadriceps Stretch**

- Use a wall for support if doing this stretch standing.
- Hold the top of your foot with the opposite hand and pull your heel toward your buttocks.
- Pull gently and not past the initial point of tension.

### **Calf Stretch**

- Stand back from a wall.
- Lean forward on the wall with your forearms; head resting on your hands.
- Place one leg forward, bent, and the other straightened out behind.
- Move hips forward, keeping the lower back flat, while you push the heel of the outstretched leg into the floor.



### **Back and Shoulder Stretch**

Back and Shoulders Stretch

- With feet placed shoulder width apart, place your hands on a ledge.
- Let your body drop down, keeping your knees slightly bent.
- Make sure your hips are directly above your feet.

### **Hip Stretch**

- Put the ball of your foot on a table, chair or wall (any secure support).
- Gently bend that knee of the raised leg as you push your hips forward.
- Hold this position for 25 seconds, and then repeat with the other side.



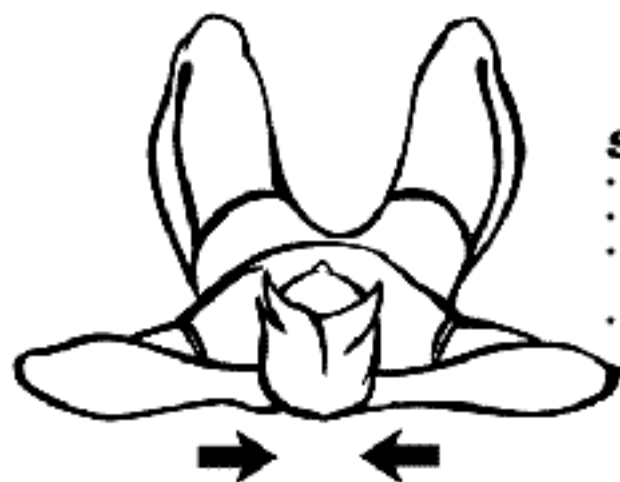
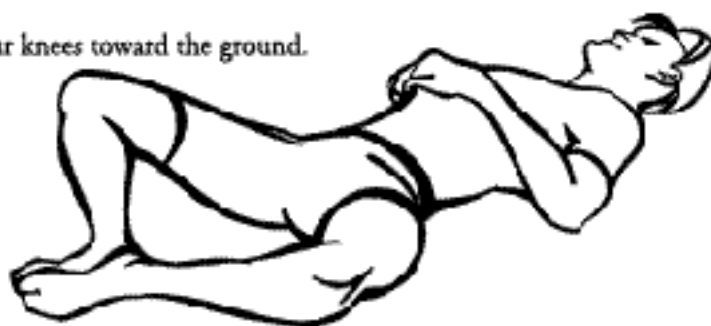


### **Another Hamstring Stretch**

- Extend one leg forward, with the other bent and tucked in with the sole of your foot against the inside of the extended leg.
- Slowly bend and reach toward the ankle of your extended leg.
- Grasp your ankle and hold this stretch for 30 seconds.
- Don't worry if you can't reach your ankle. Only stretch as far as is comfortable.

### **Relaxed Chicken Stretch**

- Now lay back and place the soles of your feet together, bending your knees.
- Let gravity take over and drop your knees toward the ground. You will feel a gentle stretch.
- Hold this position for 30 seconds.



### **Shoulder Scrunch**

- Place the soles of your feet flat on the floor.
- Keep your knees bent and your lower back pressed into the floor.
- Lock your fingers behind your head, and pull your shoulder blades together.
- Hold this for 15 seconds then relax and repeat.

### **Upper Back Stretch**

- Interlock your fingers behind your back.
- Gently straighten your arms while turning your elbows in.
- Now slowly raise your arms behind you until you feel a stretch.
- Hold this for 10 seconds.
- Make sure to keep your chest out and your chin down.





### ***Tricep Stretch***

- With your arms over (and slightly behind) your head, place one hand on the opposite elbow.
- Gently pull the elbow behind your head and your head until you feel a stretch along the backside of your arm.
- Hold for 10 seconds and repeat with the other arm.

### ***Neck Stretch***

- Roll your head in a half circle, starting at one shoulder and circling forward to the other shoulder.
- Keep your back straight, and never rotate your head to the back.
- Repeat this a few times until you feel the tension begin to release.

