District Wellness Challenge

October 2026

DERBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Wellness Compass
www.derbyschools.com

Pick the challenge that fits you best – but remember, this is meant to be a challenge, so choose something you may not normally do.



OPTION 01

Healthy Habits Bingo

Small habits can make a big difference!
Complete activities on the attached bingo card that support your physical, mental, and emotional well-being.
Complete rows, columns, or challenge youself to a blackout!



OPTION 02

Mindful Stretching

Take a few minutes to stretch, breathe, and reset! Use the attached guides for ideas or choose your own stretches.
Mark each day you stretch on the October calendar.

Use the attached calendars to track the days you complete your chosen challenge. Submit your completed calendar at the end of the Wellness Year as proof that you participated in the October 2026 District Wellness Challenge.

Our Wellness Challenges are designed to help us build healthy habits that can improve our daily lives.
It takes 18–21 days to form a habit, so stick with it!



Healthy Habits Bingo

Challenge yourself to complete rows, columns, or get a blackout!

Ate a healthy lunch	Write your own _____ _____ _____	Talked about how I feel	Stretched for 5 minutes	Took a break from screens
Played a game with family/friends	Went for a walk	Ate vegetables	Write your own _____ _____ _____	Practiced good posture
Write your own _____ _____ _____	Cleaned up my space	Took time to relax	Drank 8 glasses of water	Tried a new healthy food
Practiced meditation	Ate fruit	Write your own _____ _____ _____	Wrote in my journal	Practiced kindness
Did a fun workout	Did something nice for someone else	Spent time reading	Gave myself a compliment	Write your own _____ _____ _____
Listened to my favorite music	Write your own _____ _____ _____	Visited a fun place	Did something nice for yourself	Made a gratitude list

October 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

print-a-calendar.com

MINDFUL

STRETCHING GUIDE



Be Well at Work
Faculty/Staff Wellness

INTRODUCTION TO MINDFUL STRETCHING

Stretching is a safe and useful activity for healthy adults that can help improve overall flexibility, neuromuscular coordination, balance and postural awareness. Consistently moving joints through their full range of motion three to five days per week, can also decrease the risk of injury when performing activities of daily living and ease pain from chronic conditions such as: back pain and osteoarthritis.

Stretching may affect your mind as well as body. When done in a slow and focused manner, an extended stretching routine can be an excellent relaxation method and stress reducer.

TYPES OF STRETCHES

There are two types of stretches – static and ballistic stretches.

Static Stretches – stretching when the position is held for a given amount of time, usually 15-30 seconds. This stretch is most effective AFTER warming up (or dynamic stretching)

- **Active static stretch:** the muscle being stretched does the work. Example: cobra and downward dog.
- **Passive static stretch:** depends on gravity or a prop such as a partner, strap or elastic band. Example: stretching your hamstrings by bending over and touching your toes.

Ballistic stretches – stretching that involves bouncing quickly to go deeper into a stretch or increase a muscles length and range of motion.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL STRETCHING

A successful stretch program should:

- Involve all the major groups from head to toe: neck, shoulders, chest, trunk, lower back, hips, legs and ankles.
- Be designed with a goal to stretch 2 – 3 days per week
- Have enough time allotted to:
  - Hold each stretch for a minimum of 15 – 30 seconds.
  - Hold each stretch for 60 seconds (Ex: 3 x 15 secs or 2 x 30 secs), for optimal results.
  - Complete 2 – 4 repetitions per stretch

STRETCHING DO'S AND DON'TS

No Pain

- Do not continue to stretch if you feel any sudden, sharp or intense pain.
- Do not begin a stretch program if you have been experiencing significant joint or back pain. First seek the guidance from a medical professional.
- Do stretch to a point where you feel mild tension and relax as you hold the stretch.

No Bouncing

- Performing ballistic stretches or bouncing during stretches can increase your risk of injury. This type of stretching is not recommended.

Relax

- Do breathe slowly, rhythmically and under control.
- Relax your mind and body as much as possible.
- Do focus on the muscles you want to stretch

Good Posture

- Remember to have good posture when standing or sitting such as:
  - Chin parallel to the floor
  - Chest lifted
  - Shoulders even
  - Arms at your sides, elbows relaxed and even with each other
  - Abdominals engaged
  - Hips even
  - Knees even and pointing straight ahead
  - Feet pointing straight ahead
  - Body weight evenly distributed on both feet when standing or feet flat on the floor when seating

STEP ONE: RELEASE THE TENSION

According to the Arthritis foundation, having a chronic disease like osteoarthritis can be stressful. Stress, in turn, can make dealing with a disease like osteoarthritis more difficult – and painful.

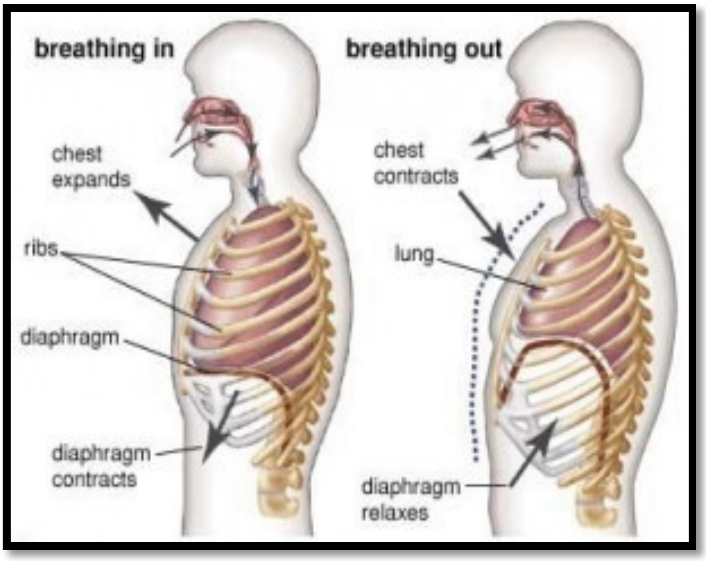
That's because when you feel stressed, your body becomes tense. This muscle tension can increase pain, making you feel helpless and frustrated because the added pain may limit your abilities. This, in turn, can depress you. Stress, depression and limited and lost abilities can all contribute to pain, which then perpetuates the cycle. If you understand how your body reacts physically and emotionally to stress and learn how to manage stress, you can break the destructive cycle.

Learning to connect with your body through mindful breathing and relaxation exercises prior to stretching will help to diminish this perpetual cycle by decreasing tension and anxiety.

TO BEGIN

Schedule a time during the day when external distractions can be eliminated for a minimum of 10 - 15 minutes.

Next, find a quiet and comfortable place to begin the breathing exercises. Either while sitting on a chair, or on cushions or lying down on a yoga mat or soft surface.



MINDFUL RELAXATION EXERCISES

SIMPLE YOGA BREATHING

Yoga breathing is relaxing and meditative. Try practicing this beginner technique so you can apply it while holding stretches.

1. Sit or lie down comfortably, resting your hands below your navel.

2. Tune in to the way you breathe. Inhale and exhale naturally through your nose for a few minutes, noticing the slight rise and fall of your hand. Consider the way the air feels as it enters and exits your nostrils.

3. Start to count silently forward (one, two, three...), then backward (...three, two, one), as you breathe in and out.

4. Gradually make each exhalation twice as long as each inhalation. Focus on breathing slowly and smoothly, hummingeach time you exhale. The slight vibration is very soothing.

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4-4-8 BREATHING TECHNIQUE

The 4-4-8 is a basic **breathing technique** designed to help you relax and focus. This technique is great if you feel stressed or tense. Using this technique can help you get rid of the tension so you can focus on what you need and want to do. No matter what your goal is, deep breathing can help you focus, clarify your thinking, and feel less stressed as you move forward.

This breathing technique has four easy steps:

1. Breathe in through your nose for a count of 4, taking the breath into your stomach.

2. Hold your breath for a count of 4.

3. Release your breath through your mouth with a whooshing sound for a count of 8. Think of emptying a glass of water.

4. Without a break, breathe in again for a count of 4, repeating the entire technique three to four times in a row, then resume normal breathing and activity.

5. Focus on counting when breathing in, holding the breath, and breathing out.

You may find yourself feeling mildly light-headed after doing this. That's actually a sign it is working, and it will quickly pass. Feel free to do this as often as you want, but you may need to get used to it first.

If you use a second hand on a watch to countyour breaths, the whole exercise will take just 57 seconds! But it doesn't reallymatter if each count lasts an actual second; it only matters that you *count evenly*so the ratio of 4-4-8 is maintained.

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PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXTION – SHORT HAND VERSION

In this procedure, whole muscle groups are simultaneously tensed and then relaxed. Repeat each procedure at least once, tensing each muscle group from five to seven seconds and then relaxing from fifteen to thirty seconds. Remember to notice the contrast between the sensations of tension and relaxation.

1. Curl both fists, tightening biceps and forearms. Hold. Relax.

2. Roll your head around on your neck clockwise in a complete circle, then reverse. Hold. Relax.

3. Wrinkle up the muscles of your face like a walnut: forehead wrinkled, eyes squinted, mouth opened, and shoulders hunched. Hold. Relax.

4. Arch your shoulders back as you take a deep breath into your chest. Hold. Relax. Take a deep breath, pushing out your stomach. Hold. Relax.

5. Straighten your lets and point your toes back toward your face, tightening your shins. Hold. Relax.

6. Straighten your legs and curl your toes, simultaneously tightening your calves, thighs, and buttocks. Relax.

STEP 2: WARM-UP PRIOR TO STRETCHING

Prior to beginning a stretch program, you should warm up for 5 – 10 minutes. Warming up prepares you for a stretch program by gradually increasing your heart rate, blood flow and raising the temperature of your muscles, ligaments and tendons. This will help to prevent injury from stretching cold muscles.

DYNAMIC WARM-UP EXERCISES (see handout)

If you are limited on time, performing dynamic exercises will help to warm-up your muscles, increase your range of motion and joint mobility. Dynamic exercises allow your body to move in multiple directions such as forwards and backwards, side to side and rotationally.

- Should be performed 10 – 20 times per side.
- Start with the small movements and gradually work to larger movement.

CARDIO EXERCISES

Cardiovascular exercises incorporate any continuous activity that helps to raise your heart rate such as: walking, swimming, biking, rowing, cycling, jump roping.

STEP 3: STRETCH

	STRETCHES FOR FLEXIBILITY AND TO RELIEVE BACK DISCOMOFORT	STRETCHES FOR OESTEOARTHRITIS and KNEE DISCOMFORT
Knees to Chest	*	
Floor Pretzel	*	
Double Knee Torso Rotation	*	
Butterfly	*	
Cobra	*	
Kneeling Hip Flexor stretch	*	*
Hamstring Stretch with Strap	*	*
Full Body Stretch with Strap	*	
Side Stretch with Strap	*	
Floor Hip Flexor Stretch		*
Single Knee Rotation		*
Side-lying Quadriceps Stretch		*
Inner Thigh Stretch with Strap		*
Outer Thigh Stretch with Strap		*

WARM-UP WITH DYNAMIC STRETCHES

Dynamic stretches

This routine will help you limber up for any sport and can serve as a warm-up. To see the complete sequence, go to www.health.harvard.edu/dynamic-stretches.



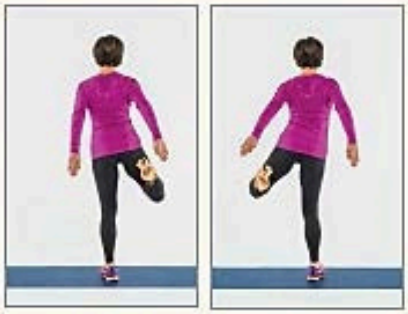
1. Shoulder rolls
Stand up straight with your feet hip-width apart and arms at your sides. Roll your shoulders up, back, and down. Your thumbs point forward as you start the move. Palms point forward, elbows slightly bent, as you finish each shoulder roll.



2. Overhead reach
Stand up straight with your feet hip-width apart. Reach toward the ceiling with your right arm, while shifting your weight from your right foot to your left foot and tapping the toes of the right foot. Repeat on the left.



3. Torso rotation with a reach
Stand up straight with your feet hip-width apart. Reach toward the left wall with your right arm and then the right wall with your left arm, while shifting your weight with each change of direction. Tap your toes with each shift.



4. Hamstring curls
Stand up straight with your feet hip-width apart. Alternately bring your right foot, then your left foot, toward your buttocks. Press your arms backward as you do so.



5. Shallow side lunges
Stand up straight with your feet in a wide stance, toes pointing forward. Alternate shallow side lunges to the right and the left, hinging forward at the hip and bringing both hands to your upper thigh on the lunge.



6. Knee lifts
Stand up straight, bringing your feet together. Lift your right knee and then your left knee, touching both hands to the knee being lifted. For a more challenging dynamic stretch, lift your knee high enough to grasp the top of your shin with your hands and pull your leg gently in toward your body, then release it.



7. Arm sweeps
Stand up straight with your feet together. As you inhale, sweep your arms out to the sides and up toward the ceiling. As you exhale, sweep your arms down to your sides.

FLOOR STRETCHES

These 14 floor stretches are best performed on a cushioned mat, although a thick carpet or towels will do. If you find it difficult to lie on the floor, many of these stretches can be done while sitting on a chair.



1 | Knees to chest

Primarily stretches the back

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Lie on your back with your legs extended on the floor.

Movement: Relax your shoulders against the floor. Slowly bend your knees and pull them in toward your chest with your hands. Hold. Return to the starting position.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- When holding the stretch, remain as still as possible, without bouncing.
- Breathe comfortably.



2 | Floor hip flexor stretch

Primarily stretches the front of the hip

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Lie on your back with your legs extended on the floor.

Movement: Relax your shoulders against the floor. Bend your right knee. Rest your hands on the back of your thigh and pull your knee toward your chest. Flex your left foot and press the thigh and calf of that leg down toward the floor as you do so. Feel the stretch in the front of your left hip and top of your thigh. Hold. Return to the starting position and repeat with the other leg. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- When holding the stretch, remain as still as possible, without bouncing.
- Breathe comfortably.

8 | Cobra

Primarily stretches the back and abdomen

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 5 yoga breaths or 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Lie on your stomach with your forehead on the mat and legs comfortably extended with toes pointed. Place your hands just below your shoulders, palms facing down and fingers together.

Movement: Press your palms against the floor to slowly lift your head, shoulders, and chest. Keep your elbows back and soft, and your head and neck in neutral alignment. Hold. Return slowly to the starting position.

Tips and techniques:

- Lift only to the point of mild tension. You should feel no pain in your lower back.
- Be careful not to lock your elbows while lifting upward.
- While holding, take full breaths by inhaling gently through your nose and lengthening the outbreath as you exhale through your nose.







3 | Floor pretzel

Primarily stretches the buttocks, hip, and outer thigh

Reps: 2
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Lie on your back with your right knee bent and foot on the floor. Rest your left ankle at the top of your right knee. Your left knee should point toward the wall. Grasp the back of your right thigh with both hands.

Movement: Keep your shoulders down and back, relaxing them against the floor. Slowly lift your right foot off the floor until you feel the stretch in your left hip and buttock. Hold. Return to the starting position. Repeat with your left knee bent and your right ankle resting on your left kneecap. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- If it's too hard to grasp your thigh with both hands, put a strap or small towel around the back of the thigh and hold both ends.
- Hold the stretch as still as possible without bouncing.



4 | Single knee rotation

Primarily stretches the back, hip, and outer thigh

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Lie on your back with your legs extended on the floor.

Movement: Relax your shoulders against the floor. Bend your left knee and place your left foot on your right thigh just above the knee. Tighten your abdominal muscles, then grasp your left knee with your right hand and gently pull it across your body toward the right wall. Hold. Return to the starting position and repeat on the other side. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- Try to keep both shoulders flat on the floor.
- To increase the stretch, look in the direction opposite to your knee.

5 | Double knee torso rotation

Primarily stretches the back, chest, hip, and outer thigh

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet together, flat on the floor. Put your arms out comfortably to each side at shoulder level, palms up.

Movement: Tighten your abdominal muscles and lift both knees toward your chest, then lower them together to the left side on the floor. Keeping your shoulders relaxed and pressed into the floor, look in the opposite direction. Feel the stretch across your chest and torso. Hold. Bring both knees back to center and return your right foot, then your left foot, to the floor. Repeat in the opposite direction. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- If necessary, put a rolled towel between your knees to make this stretch easier.
- Try to bring both knees up into the fetal position. Ideally, keep them together throughout the stretch.









7 | Butterfly

Primarily stretches the shoulders and chest

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Keeping your shoulders down and back, press them against the floor. Place both hands gently behind your head, elbows pointing toward the ceiling.

Movement: Slowly lower your elbows toward the floor to the point of tightness. Hold. Return to the starting position.

Tips and techniques:

- When holding the stretch, stay as still as possible, without bouncing.
- If necessary, limit the stretch by placing a small pillow on either side of your shoulders and gently pressing into the pillows.
- You can do this stretch while seated, too.



12 | Side-lying quadriceps stretch

Primarily stretches the front of the thigh

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Lie on your left side with your legs stacked and extended on the floor. Rest your left arm under your head.

Movement: Bend your right knee and bring your heel toward your right buttock, reaching back with your right hand to grasp your foot. Hold. Slowly return to the starting position. Turn onto your other side and repeat. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- If you have trouble reaching your foot, place a stretch strap around your ankle and gently pull the strap toward your buttocks.
- Breathe comfortably.



13 | Kneeling hip flexor stretch

Primarily stretches the front of the hip and the sides

Reps: 2
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Kneel with your hands at your sides.

Movement: Put your right leg in front of you with the knee bent at a 90-degree angle and foot flat on the floor. Place your hands on your right thigh for support. Lean forward, pressing into the hip of your left leg while keeping your right foot on the floor. Hold. Return to the starting position, then repeat with your left leg forward. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- Keep your head and spine neutral, your shoulders down and back, and your abdominal muscles tightened.
- Keep your pelvis tucked forward, rather than letting it tip back.

FLOOR STRETCHES USING A STRAP

The strap used in these five stretches helps you position yourself correctly even if your muscles are tight. It allows you to limit a stretch by keeping the strap long or gently deepen a stretch as your body becomes more flexible by moving your grip up on the strap. As with all floor stretches, using a cushioned mat, or a thick carpet or towels, will help keep you comfortable.



1 | Hamstring stretch with strap

Primarily stretches the back of the thigh

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Lie on your back with your right leg extended on the floor. Bend your left knee to place the stretch strap securely around your left foot. Hold the strap with both hands.

Movement: Flex the foot of your left leg and lift that heel toward the ceiling, straightening the leg as much as possible without locking the knee. As you do so, flex the foot of your extended right leg, pressing the thigh and calf down toward the floor. Gently pull on the strap to the point of muscle tightness. Hold. Return to the starting position. Finish all reps, then repeat on the other leg.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch the leg that is raised toward the ceiling to the point of mild tension. You should not feel any pressure behind the knee.
- Place the strap in the middle of your foot to secure it safely.
- Breathe comfortably.



2 | Inner thigh stretch with strap

Primarily stretches the inner thigh

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Lie on your back with your right knee bent and foot on the floor. Bend your left knee to place the strap securely around your left foot. As you extend your foot toward the ceiling, straighten your leg as much as possible without locking the knee. Keeping your shoulders down and pressing into the floor, hold both ends of the strap in your left hand. Place your right arm out to your side on the floor just below shoulder level.

Movement: Tighten your abdominal muscles and slowly lower your left foot out to the left to the point of tightness while keeping your hips pressed to the floor. Hold. Return to the starting position. Repeat on the other side. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain. You should not feel any pressure behind the knee.
- Focus on keeping both shoulders and hips evenly on the floor, and your shoulders down and back.
- Breathe comfortably.

3 | Outer thigh stretch with strap

Primarily stretches the buttocks, outer thigh, and back of the thigh

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Lie on your back with your right knee bent and foot on the floor. Bend your left knee to place the strap securely around your left foot. Keeping your shoulders down and pressing into the floor, hold both ends of the strap in your right hand and place your left arm on the floor just below shoulder level.

Movement: Slightly bend your left knee and slowly pull your left leg across your body toward the right wall. Hold. Return to the starting position. Repeat on the other side. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- To increase the stretch, pull the leg across your body and then up toward the wall behind you.
- Breathe comfortably.







4 | Full-body stretch with strap

Primarily stretches the upper body, abdominal muscles, and lower body

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Lie on your back with both legs extended. Hold the strap shoulder-distance apart with both hands by your hips.

Movement: Slowly lift the strap up toward the ceiling, then over your head and back down toward the floor as you point your toes, keeping feet together. Hold. Return to the starting position.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- If you cannot comfortably bring your arms down to the floor when reaching overhead, try placing a pillow above your head and pressing the backs of your arms into it.
- Breathe comfortably.

5 | Side stretch with strap

Primarily stretches the sides, arms, and shoulders

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Sit up straight on the floor with chest lifted, shoulders down and back, knees bent, and ankles crossed. Hold the strap in both hands with your arms extended in a V shape.



Movement: Slowly lift the strap up toward the ceiling. Then lower your right hand to the floor near your right hip while continuing to hold the strap with your arms extended. Hold. Return to the starting position, then repeat to the left side. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- As you reach to one side during this stretch, press the opposite hip into the floor.
- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- Breathe comfortably.

SEATED STRETCHES

Practically everyone can do these 11 seated stretches. They can be done virtually anywhere—at work, in a hotel, or at home—and are especially helpful if you have trouble balancing while standing or find our floor stretches too challenging. Many of these stretches are perfect for relaxing muscles that tense up during desk work.



1 | Seated shoulder stretch

Primarily stretches the shoulder

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Sit up straight on a chair. Put your left hand on your right shoulder. Cup your left elbow with your right hand.

Movement: Roll your shoulders down and back, then gently pull your left elbow across your chest as you extend your left arm. Hold. Return to the starting position, then repeat on the opposite side. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- Keep your shoulders down and back away from your ear during the stretch.
- Breathe comfortably.



2 | Seated triceps stretch

Primarily stretches the back of the upper arm and the shoulder

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Sit up straight with your arms at your sides.

Movement: Place your right hand on your right shoulder. Clasp your right elbow with your left hand. Keeping your shoulders down and back, lift your elbow up toward the ceiling to the point of tightness. Hold. Return to the starting position. Repeat on the other side. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- Keep your head and spine neutral, shoulders down and back, and abdominal muscles tightened.
- Breathe comfortably.

3 | Seated overhead stretch



Primarily stretches the abdominal muscles and upper body

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Sit up straight with your arms at your sides.

Movement: Interlace your fingers and rotate your palms so they face down. Keep your shoulders down and back as you lift your arms up toward the ceiling. Your palms should now be facing up. Hold. Slowly return to the starting position.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- Keep your shoulders down and back during the stretch.
- Breathe comfortably.

4 | Seated chest stretch



Primarily stretches the chest and shoulders

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Sit up straight facing sideways in a chair without arms.

Movement: Roll your shoulders down and back. Clasp your hands behind you. Gently lift your hands toward the ceiling to the point of tightness. Hold. Slowly return to the starting position.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- Keep your shoulders down and back during the stretch.
- Breathe comfortably.

5 | Seated wrist stretch





Primarily stretches the wrist and arm

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Sit up straight in a chair. Put your left arm out in front of you, palm down.

Movement: This is a two-step stretch. Point the fingers of your left hand toward the ceiling. Place the palm of your right hand across your left fingers on the palm side. Gently press to increase the stretch, stopping if you feel any pain. Hold. Return to the starting position. Now bend your left hand at the wrist, pointing your fingers downward. Cup your right hand across the back of your left hand, then gently press to increase the stretch, stopping if you feel any pain. Hold. Finish all reps, then switch arms and repeat both steps on the other side.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- If this stretch is too difficult for you, perform circular motions with your wrists in both directions to help loosen the joint.
- Maintain neutral posture with your shoulders down and back.
- Breathe comfortably.



6 | Seated hamstring stretch

Primarily stretches the rear of the thigh

Reps: 2–4 **Hold:** 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Sit up straight near the front of a chair with your feet flat on the floor.

Movement: Extend your right leg straight in front of you with your heel grounded on the floor and your toes pointing toward the ceiling. Hinge forward from the hip, placing your hands on your left thigh for support. Keep your spine neutral. Hold. Return to the starting position. Repeat with your left leg. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain. You should not feel any pressure behind the knee or at your back.
- Keep your shoulders down and back. As you hinge forward, imagine your chin reaching toward your foot.
- Breathe comfortably.

7 | Seated ear-to-shoulder stretch



Primarily stretches the neck

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Sit up straight near the front of a chair with your hands at your sides.

Movement: Roll your shoulders down and back. Use your right hand to clasp your left wrist behind your back at waist level. Gently pull your left hand toward your right hip and drop your right ear toward your right shoulder. Hold. Slowly return to the starting position. Repeat on the other side. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain. You should not feel any pain in your neck.
- Keep your shoulders down and back.
- Breathe comfortably.

8 | Seated neck rotation

Primarily stretches the neck

Reps: 2–4 **Hold:** 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Sit up straight in a chair with your chest lifted, shoulders down and back, and chin parallel to the floor. Rest your hands on your legs.

Movement: Slowly rotate your head to the right. Hold. Return to the starting position. Finish all reps, then repeat on the other side.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain. You should not feel any pain in your neck.
- Each time you rotate your head, choose a spot to focus on while holding. This spot should move noticeably as your range of motion improves.
- Breathe comfortably.



9 | Seated pretzel

Primarily stretches the buttocks, hip, and outer thigh

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds



Starting position: Sit up straight in a chair and rest your left ankle on your right knee. Place your hands on your thighs.

Movement: Keeping your spine neutral, slowly hinge forward from your hips until you feel mild tension in your left hip and buttock. Hold. Slowly return to the starting position. Repeat with your right ankle on your left knee. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- Keep your spine neutral, not rounded, and your shoulders down and back.
- Breathe comfortably, exhaling as you hinge forward.

10 | Seated inner thigh stretch

Primarily stretches the inner thigh

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds



Starting position: Sit up straight near the front of a chair. Open your legs as far apart as possible, knees and toes pointed outward. Place your hands on your thighs.

Movement: Keeping your spine neutral, hinge forward from the hips until you feel mild tension along your inner thighs. Hold. Return to the starting position.

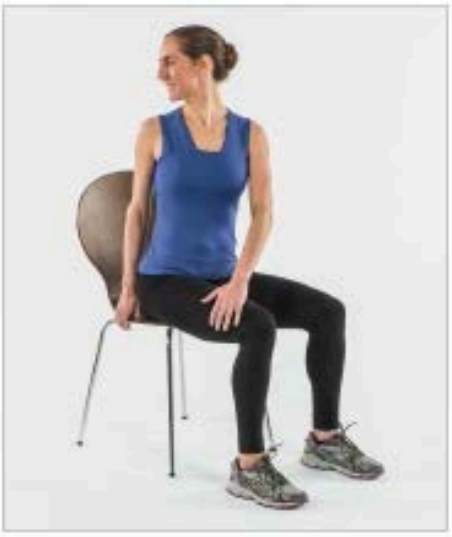
Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- As you hinge forward, push your hands into your legs to increase the stretch.
- Breathe comfortably.

11 | Seated rotation

Primarily stretches the back

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds



Starting position: Sit up straight on a chair with your feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart, and your arms at your sides.

Movement: Slowly rotate your head and torso to the right side, placing your left hand on the outside of your right knee and your right hand next to your right hip. Hold. Slowly return to the starting position. Repeat to the opposite side. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- As you rotate, keep your hips squared and facing forward.
- Breathe comfortably.

STANDING STRETCHES

These five classic stretches enhance flexibility in key leg muscles and parts of the upper body. These stretches can help you walk, run, and reach more easily, which makes a difference in sports and daily tasks.



1 | Calf stretch

Primarily stretches the calf, Achilles' tendon, and ankle

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Stand up straight. Hold the back of a chair or press your hands against a wall, arms extended at shoulder height.

Movement: Extend your right leg straight back and press the heel toward the floor. Allow your left knee to bend as you do so, while keeping that heel grounded on the floor. Hold. Return to the starting position, then repeat with your left leg. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- Hold a full-body lean from the ankle as you stretch.
- Maintain neutral posture with your shoulders down and back.



2 | Soleus stretch

Primarily stretches the soleus (deeper calf muscle) and Achilles' tendon

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Hold the back of a chair or press your hands against a wall, arms extended at shoulder height.

Movement: Extend your right leg straight back and press the heel toward the floor. Allow your left knee to bend as you do so, while keeping the heel grounded on the floor. Now bend your right knee as much as possible, pressing into the back heel. Hold. Return to the starting position. Finish all reps, then repeat with your other leg.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- Maintain neutral posture with your shoulders down and back.
- Breathe comfortably.

3 | Standing chest and shoulder stretch

Primarily stretches the chest, shoulders, and biceps



Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Stand at arm's length away from a wall or a doorway, facing away from it. Extend your left arm and put your left hand on the wall, or the edge of the door frame, slightly below shoulder level, palm facing forward and touching the door frame. Keep your shoulders down and back.

Movement: Slowly turn your body to the right, away from the wall or door frame, until you feel the stretch in your chest and shoulder. Hold. Return to the starting position. Finish all reps, then repeat on the other side.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain.
- If the stretch is too difficult, lower your arm on the wall or door frame.
- Breathe comfortably.

4 | Standing quadriceps stretch

Primarily stretches the front of the thigh



Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Stand up straight, feet together, holding the back of a chair with both hands.

Movement: Bend your right knee and reach back with your right hand to grasp your foot, lifting it toward your right buttock. Keep your pelvis neutral. Hold. Slowly lower your foot to the floor. Switch position to repeat with your left leg. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Try to keep both knees together, with the bent knee pointing toward the floor.
- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain. If you have trouble grasping your foot, place a stretch strap around it to assist with the stretch.
- Breathe comfortably.



5 | Standing hamstring stretch

Primarily stretches the back of the thigh

Reps: 2–4
Hold: 10–30 seconds

Starting position: Stand up straight with your arms at your sides.

Movement: Extend your right leg straight in front of you, heel grounded on the floor and toes pointing to the ceiling. Place your hands on your upper thighs for support and hinge forward from the hip, keeping your spine neutral. Hold. Return to the starting position. Repeat with the other leg. This is one rep.

Tips and techniques:

- Stretch to the point of mild tension, not pain. You should not feel any pressure behind the knee or at your back.
- Keep your shoulders down and back.
- Breathe comfortably.

REFERENCES

Elson, D., & Gardiner, J. (2014). Stretching: 35 stretches to improve flexibility and reduce pain. *The Harvard Health Publication*. Retrieved May 20, 2015, from www.health.harvard.edu

http://coe.ucsf.edu/ivf/Instructions_for_Mindful_Relaxation_Exercises.pdf. UCSF Center for Reproductive Health Support Services Instructions for Mindful Relaxation Exercises

STRETCH AWAY STRESS

Be Well at Work

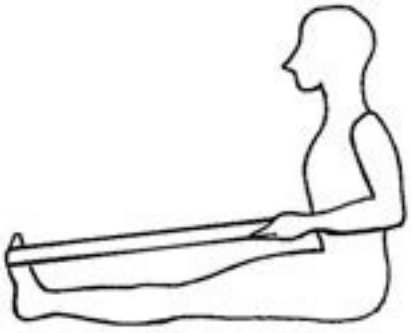
Artworkby Jeanie Ramos



Triceps Stretch



Quadriceps Strech



Calf Stretch



Overhead Side Stretch

Start



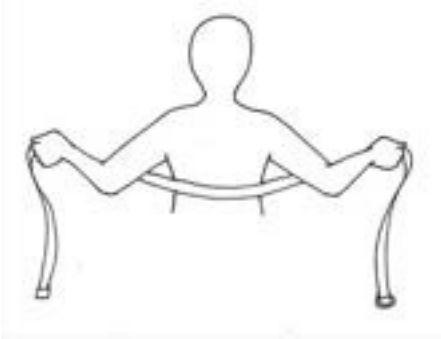
Shoulder Stretch

Mid-Stretch



Chest & Biceps Stretch

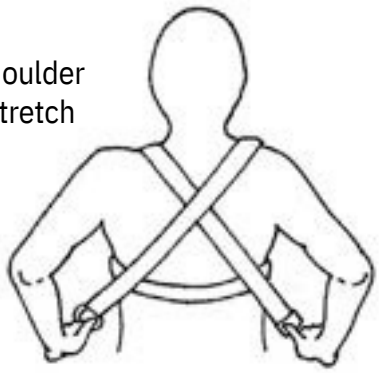
End



Step 1: Wrap strap around back

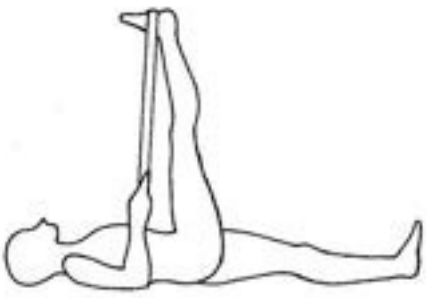


Step 2: Wrap Straps over shoulders



Shoulder Stretch

Step 3: Cross straps & pull



Hamstring Stretcch

Warm up first. Do not lock knee.



Inner Thigh Stretch

Open stretch. Keep hips on floor.



Outer Thigh Stretch

Cross leg over body.