

Flexibility Exercises



Fall, Injury Prevention for Seniors

Preparing the body for exercise is important for persons at any age and fitness level. The key to preventing injuries before exercising is to warm up. One of the best ways to warm up is to do flexibility or stretching exercises.

The key to proper stretching lies in the way you perform the exercise. When you are stretching certain parts of your body, you should not feel pain. Staying relaxed is very important to stretching properly. Make sure your body is not tight. Your shoulders, hands and feet should be kept relaxed as you stretch. Breathe slowly.

Here are some exercises developed by the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. The exercises will help warm up various parts of your body.

Lower Back

Tighten your hip muscles and at the same time, tighten your abdominal muscles to flatten your lower back. Hold for 5 to 8 seconds, then relax. Repeat two or three times.



Pull your right leg toward your chest. If possible, keep the back of your head on the floor. Try to keep your lower back flat. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat with your left leg.



Hip and Groin

With arms supplying slight resistance on inside of legs, slowly push down your knees. Hold for 5 to 8 seconds.



Place one leg forward, while your knee of the other leg is resting on the floor. Without changing the position of the knee on the floor or the forward leg, lower the front of your hip downward. Hold for 30 seconds.



Knee and Calf

Hold the top of your left foot with right hand and gently pull heel toward buttocks. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat with other leg.



Stand close to a solid support, and lean on it with your forearms, head resting on hands. Bend one leg and place your foot on the ground in front of you, with the other leg straight behind. Slowly move your hips forward, keeping your lower back flat. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds. **Do not bounce.**

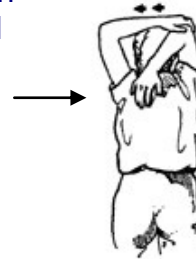


Shoulder

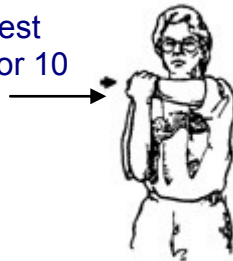
In a standing or sitting position, interlace your fingers. With your palms facing upward, push your arms slightly back and up. Hold for 15 seconds.



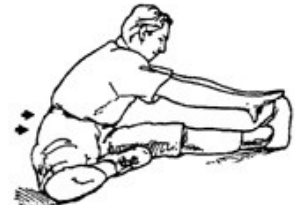
With your arms overhead, hold the elbow of one arm with the hand of your other arm. Gently pull the elbow behind your arm. Do slowly. Hold for 15 seconds. Stretch both arms.



Gently pull your elbow across your chest toward your opposite shoulder. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat with other elbow.



Sit down and straighten your left leg. The sole of your right foot should rest next to the inside of your straightened leg. Lean slightly forward and touch your foot with your fingers. Keep your left foot upright with the ankle and toes relaxed. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat with right leg.



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