

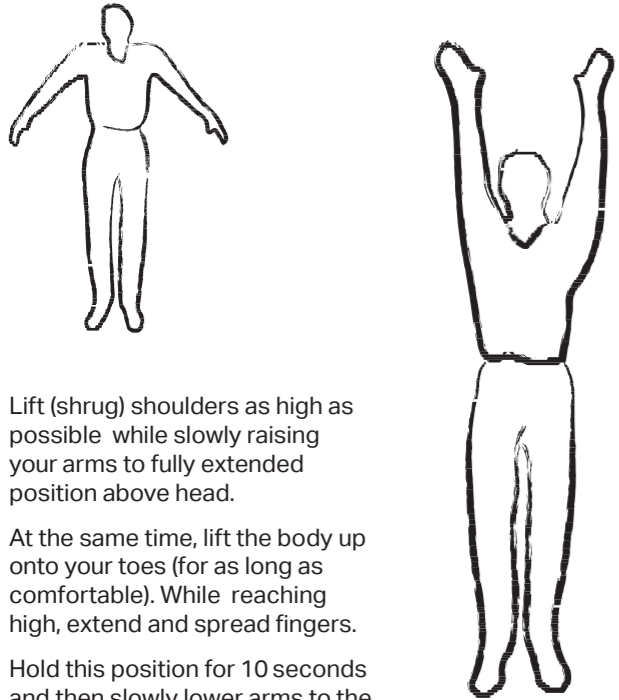
Stretch and flex

Sitting for long hours can take a toll on your body. Stay flexible by doing the following stretches to prevent aches and pains.

Warm-up before stretching

To warm your muscles up, run in place for 30 seconds.

Shoulder shrug with high reach



Lift (shrug) shoulders as high as possible while slowly raising your arms to fully extended position above head.

At the same time, lift the body up onto your toes (for as long as comfortable). While reaching high, extend and spread fingers.

Hold this position for 10 seconds and then slowly lower arms to the side into a neutral body position.

Relax while breathing slowly and rhythmically. Concentrate on your breathing rate for at least five breath cycles.

Neck stretch

Keep your neck as straight as possible while relaxing your shoulders. Tilt your head to the right. Slowly lower head toward right shoulder.



Repeat in four positions: right; left; front, and back each time returning to the upright position.



Be sure to do this slowly and do not hold your breath. There should be a complete breath cycle with each position of the head.

Triceps stretch

Bring right hand to upper back between shoulder blades from above shoulder.

Place left hand on the tricep (muscle on the underside of the arm) near the elbow.

Gently pull right elbow up and back with left hand, moving the right hand down center of upper back as far as comfortable. This should not cause pinching in the neck.

Repeat on opposite side.



Upper trunk stretch

Place hands on back of hips. Slowly arch upper body backward to a comfortable position. Hold while continuing to breathe.

Return to neutral position and repeat two more times.

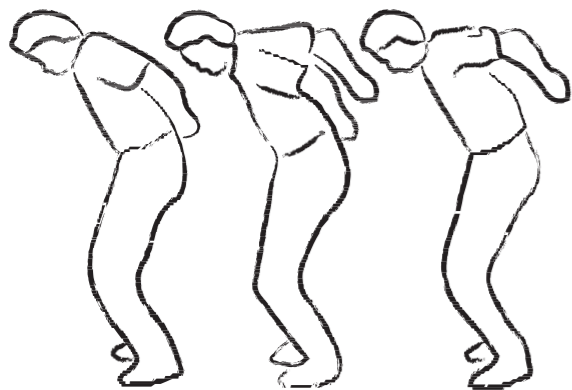


Shoulder rotation stretch

Keeping knees slightly bent, clasp hands behind back.

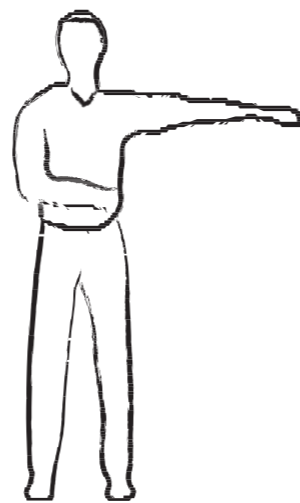
Slowly bend forward from the waist to a comfortable angle while lifting arms upward and behind your back.

Hold position for one breath cycle and slowly return to upright position. Repeat two more times.



Trunk rotation

Extend left arm out to side and grasp left hip with right hand.

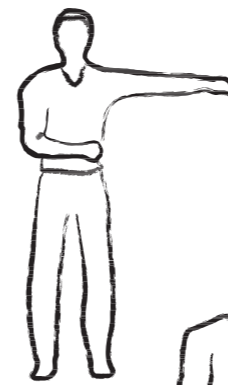


Rotate upper body to the left while pulling on hip with right hand.

Release tension and change to other side. Repeat on opposite side.

Lateral rotation stretch

Stand upright, feet slightly apart for balance. Extend left arm out to side and grasp left hip with right hand.



Rotate upper body to left while pulling on hip with right hand, then bend slowly from waist to left side to a comfortable angle.

Return to upright position and change hand locations to other side. Repeat on opposite side.

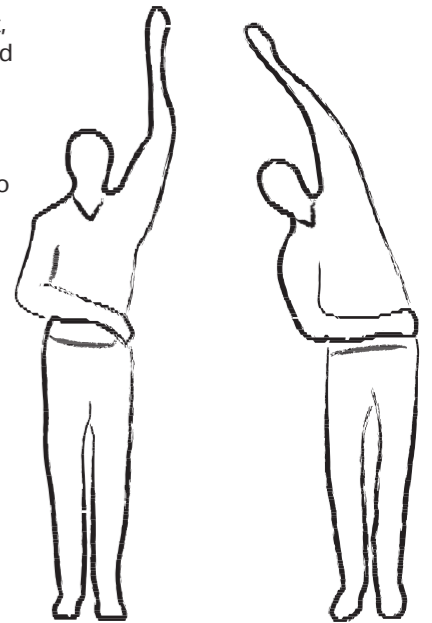
Lateral stretch

Place right hand on waist, extend left arm over head and bend upper body sideways to the right.

Hold position for one breath cycle and return to upright position.

Repeat two more times and change hand position to other side.

Repeat on opposite side.

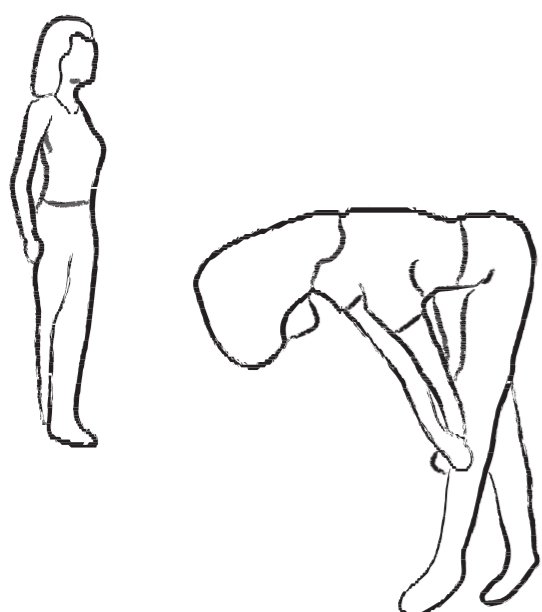


Single leg stretch

Cross legs, keeping both knees slightly flexed.

Bend forward slowly from the waist and place both hands on the forward knee. Continue bending forward as far as possible.

Hold position for one breath cycle. Switch leg positions and repeat.

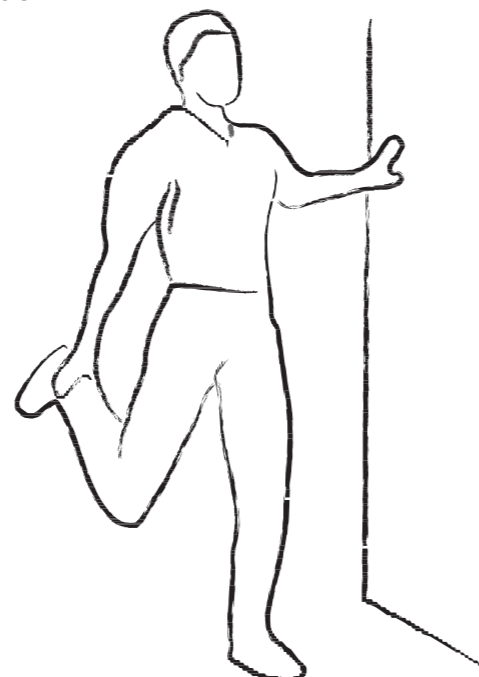


WARNING: discontinue this exercise if you become dizzy or lose your balance.

Single quadriceps stretch

With your left hand hold onto a stationary object for support, grasp your right ankle behind hips with right hand.

Pull ankle upward to stretch the quadriceps muscle.



WARNING: do not attempt this exercise if you have problems with balance or severe knee injuries. If you have knee injuries, you may elect to lift the lower leg behind you and hold the position for 10 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

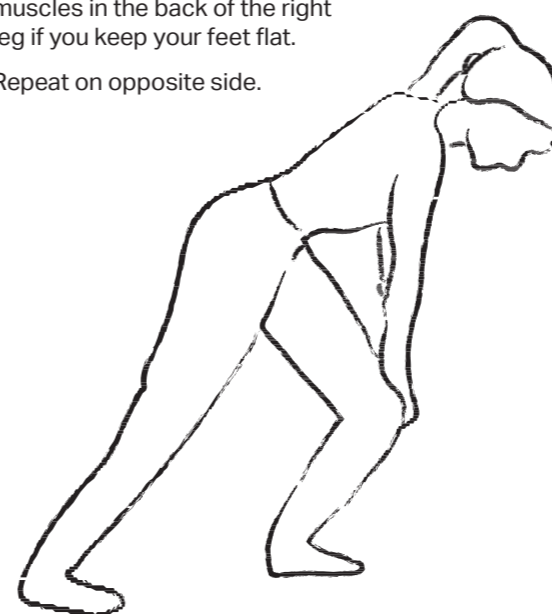
Calf stretch

Stand in upright stride position, left leg forward.

Flex the upper trunk forward and place both hands on left knee.

Keeping both feet flat on floor, slowly push hips and body forward as far as possible as though you are leaning into something. The stress should be on the calf muscles in the back of the right leg if you keep your feet flat.

Repeat on opposite side.



Wrist extension

Palms together with fingers apart, press momentarily together and release.

Stretch arms out forward and make a fist in each hand. Hold 5 seconds and open hand wide.



Force your thumbs down while keeping fingers pointing up towards the sky, wrists are bent back and elbows should be locked.

You should feel a slight burn in the upper arm muscles (extensor muscles) of the forearm. These muscles are frequently less used and developed than the flexor muscles in the forearm which leads to imbalance and potential wrist injuries.

Hold 10 seconds and release. Return your arms to the neutral arm position at your side and shake out your hands.

