

Stretching

The purpose of stretching is to keep muscles supple, increase range of motion, enhance flexibility, improve coordination, increase body temperature and heart rate and prevent injuries. The way to stretch is slow and relaxed and do not bounce the body. This can actually pull the muscles you are trying to stretch. You should stretch to the point of mild tension, if you overstretch you can cause damage to the muscles. Hold for a minimum of 30 seconds, breathe slowly and naturally and make sure you don't hold your breath. Relax the stretch and then try to stretch a little further. Results will be felt straight away and come in the form of increased feeling of relaxation, mindfulness and clarity, a feeling of lubrication (don't laugh) and increased flexibility of course!

Try 10 of my favourite stretches every second day for 10 minutes. You can do them watching TV, first thing in the morning or just before bed, it doesn't matter, just give them a go!

Cat Stretch

Kneel on your hands and knees on a mat on the floor. Slowly arch your back up to the ceiling as high as you possibly can go. Hold in that position for a 3-4 second count, return to the start of the position and repeat for 10 reps.



Lower Back Twist

This stretch aims to increase the flexibility of the lower lumbar muscles. The weight of the leg provides the stretch but it can be increased by using the hand.



Chest Stretch

Stretching the chest muscles, especially pectoralis minor can be beneficial for improving posture of the upper back and shoulder girdle.



Cobra or Abdominal Muscle Stretch

This stretch stretches your abdomen and the muscles in front of your pelvis. Try and keep your shoulders away from the ears and roll your scapula back.



Childs Pose

This pose stretches the knees and the lower back. It is a very good pose to do to get blood to the brain and is recommended if you have dizziness or extreme fatigue. You may want to open the knees a little more if you suffer from over acidity. This will create more room around the belly. It also allows deeper breathing.



Side Bends

Sit down and place the hands behind the neck. Don't twist or lean forward as you move to the side. Tense the stretched area as if to straighten up, relax it and try leaning further to the side. Hold for 30 seconds, relax and change sides. This is a great stretch for the obliques and creating space for the lungs.



Hamstring

Stretch the hamstring by increasing the angle between your thighs. Tense the hamstring as if to bring it back down and then relax it. Pull your leg toward yourself. Tense again, relax and stretch more. Hold the last tension for up to 30 seconds, change the leg.



Pigeon Pose

The best pose by far for opening up the hips – everyone can benefit from this little beauty. Our hips tend to be tight because of every day activities. We require hip strength but not hip flexibility.



Start with your feet about shoulder width apart, your arms at your sides, your knees relaxed and slightly bent. Inhale deeply and as you exhale tuck your chin down toward your chest and let your arms and shoulders start to droop. Breathing normally let your body continue to roll forward and notice your spine rounding. Allow your head, neck and arms to hang freely as your torso continues to lower. Continue to move very slowly and with awareness of what's happening in your body.



Many people think that lower back pain is caused by problems with their lower back. Sure, in some cases it is...BUT...

...most of the time, it is due to tight glute muscles!

Your gluteus maximus and gluteus medius are the two most important culprits. They can cause excruciating low back pain when they're tight. If this is your problem, give these stretches a shot. They will help relieve your pain and let you get a good



nights sleep.	
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