Basic Stretching Routine

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The neck and shoulders are notoriously tense areas of the body which we often neglect to stretch. The following stretches are meant to help ease tension in your neck and shoulders and can be done several times a day.



Basic Neck Stretch

Place your hand on your head and pull your head towards yourself for as far as it will go.

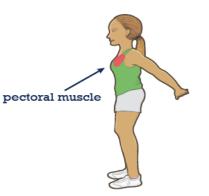
Hold the stretch for 3 seconds on each side. Do as many reps as you wish.



Shoulder Stretches

Place your hand on your elbow, straighten your arm by pressing on your elbow and pull your arm towards you until it is perfectly straight and touching your chest.

Hold the stretch for 3 seconds on each side. Do as many reps as you wish.



Chest Stretches

Lock your fingers behind you and lift your arms as far up as they will go. Bend your knees slightly, arch your back and keep your head straight.

Hold each stretch for at least 3 seconds. Do as many reps as you wish.

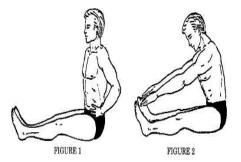


Triceps Stretches

Lift your arm over your head and touch the back of your neck with your palm. Place your other hand on your elbow and pull your arm towards you so that your palm begins to slide further down your back. Pull your arm as far back as it will go.

Hold the stretch for 3 seconds on each side. Do as many reps as you wish.

Basic Hamstring Stretch



The goal of this stretch is to eventually become flexible enough to touch your toes.

Aim for your toes and stretch your hamstrings until you can go no further. If you are flexible enough to reach past your toes, do so.

Hold each stretch for at least 5 seconds.



Single Leg Hamstring Stretch

Again, your goal is to touch your toes. If you are unable to touch your toes, grab your ankle and use it to pull yourself as close to your toes as you can.

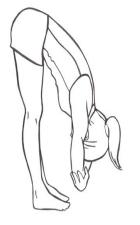
Hold each stretch for at least 5 seconds.



Reverse Hamstring Stretch

Lay flat on your back. Bend one knee at a 90 degree angle. Lift the other leg straight up, grab it by the back of the knee and pull it towards you as far as it will come. Make sure to keep that leg perfectly straight with your toes pointing straight ahead at all times.

Hold each stretch for at least 5 seconds.



Standing Hamstring Stretch

Lift your arms over your head, lock arms by grabbing hold of each of your elbows with the opposite hand, and bend at the waist, allowing the weight of your upper body to pull you down until you feel a stretch in the back of your legs.

Again, your goal is to touch your toes with your arms.

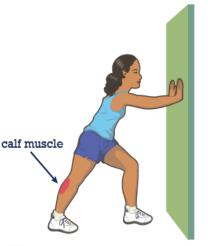
Hold each stretch for at least 5 seconds.



Quadriceps Stretch

While balancing yourself against a wall, reach back and grab your foot. Keep your head up straight and pull your leg back up towards you until your back arches and your heel either touches your butt or comes close to touching it.

Hold each stretch for at least 5 seconds.



Calf Stretch

Place both hands against a wall, and stand in a sort of a front-lunge position without lowering your knee. Instead, arch your back and move your straight leg back until you feel a stretch in your calf muscle.

Hold each stretch for at least 5 seconds.



Side Stretches

Lock your fingers and reach your arms as far above your head as they will go. Next, keeping your legs firmly together, bend at the waist, first to the right and than to the left. You should feel a deep stretch in your sides.

Hold each stretch for at least 5 seconds.



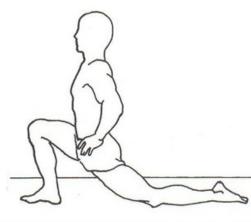
Seated Side Stretch

This is a compound stretch meaning that more than one area of the body is stretched in this move.

When in this stretch position, be sure to turn your body enough that you are glancing behind you while your chin rests on your shoulder.

If done right, you should feel a stretch in your lower back as well as your hamstrings and neck.

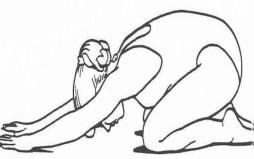
Lower Back Stretches



Simple Yoga Back Stretch

For an even deeper lower back stretch, raise your arms over your head and arch your back.

Do this stretch on both sides.



Child's Pose Lower Back Stretch

Sit on your knees, raise your arms over your head and slowly lower yourself into the child's pose.



Yoga Cat Pose

The key to doing this pose effectively is keeping your core tight. When you lower your back, you should feel a deep stretch in your lower back.

When you arch your back, pull in your abdominal muscles until you feel a deep stretch in your abdominal muscles.



On The Ball Lower Back Stretch

This is another compound stretch move, which stretches both your lower back and your abdominal muscles.

For added effect, pull yourself forward and back on the ball, using your heels.