

Stretch Chart

Why do we need to stretch?

For the human body to have optimum performance, it is essential to have a full and free range of motion in all of the joints. Stretching is an essential component of reaching and maintaining this level of function within the body. The soft tissue structures of the body (muscles, ligaments, fascia etc.) all require regular stretching to maintain optimal function. This stretching can occur through our normal daily activities or through specified stretching routines.

Unfortunately, the modern lifestyle (e.g. sitting at a desk all day, inactivity etc.) tends to lead to imbalances in tension through the body. The majority of people need to specifically address these imbalances in order to maintain optimal movement of their body. If these altered tensions are not addressed, simple activities that were once easy to do (i.e. putting on your shoes) can become difficult. When a person has to alter their life to accommodate for these imbalances in tension, further tensions will arise and the situation can spiral out of control. Once an individual finds themselves in this position a lot of life's 'normal' activities can become tiring as they find themselves continually working against their own internal resistance.

Stretching does not have to require a huge time commitment but it can have a huge impact! Here are a few of the benefits that you can expect from a regular stretching program:

- Reduced muscle tension
- Increased range of movement in the joints
- Enhanced muscular coordination
- Increased circulation of the blood to various parts of the body
- Increased energy levels
- Increased balance and spatial awareness

Everyone can learn to stretch, regardless of age or flexibility. Stretching should be a part of your daily routine whether you engage in vigorous exercise or not. Below are some simple stretches that you can do post workout, while watching TV or perhaps before getting ready for bed.

Some key points for you to remember when stretching;

- Stretching is meant to reduce tension so don't hold your breath as this increases tension
- Only take your muscle to a position that you can still remain relaxed in
- Hold each position for 20-30 seconds
- If the stretch becomes easy take yourself deeper into the movement
- Always stretch both sides of the body
- Stay well hydrated

Good luck and remember, be good to your muscles and they will be good to you!!

Stretch Chart



CALF STRETCH

Stand about three feet from a wall, feet at shoulder width and flat on the ground. With straight arms place your hands on the wall for support. Move one foot backward and push your weight back through the heel while bending your front leg slightly. You should feel a stretch up the back part of your lower leg.



ACHILLES STRETCH

Crouch down on one foot with your heel placed next to the opposite knee which is on the ground. Drop your body weight down through your heel by moving your buttock backwards and downwards. You should feel the stretch in the achilles (lower region behind the ankle) of the leg that has the heel on the ground.



HAMSTRING STRETCH

Start by sitting on the floor with one leg out in front and the other bent so the sole of your foot is touching the inner part of your out stretched leg. With your arms stretched out in front bend forward from the waist and attempt to touch your toes. If you can't reach your toes start by touching your shin and gradually work your way out to your foot over time.

Stretch Chart



HAMSTRING STRETCH FOR THE INFLEXIBLE

Start by sitting on the floor with one leg out in front and slightly bent. The other leg should be bent so that the sole of your foot is facing the inner part of your out stretched leg. Bend forward from the waist and interlock your fingers underneath the sole of your foot. Once in this position slowly try and straighten your leg.



HAMSTRING STRETCH FOR THE FLEXIBLE

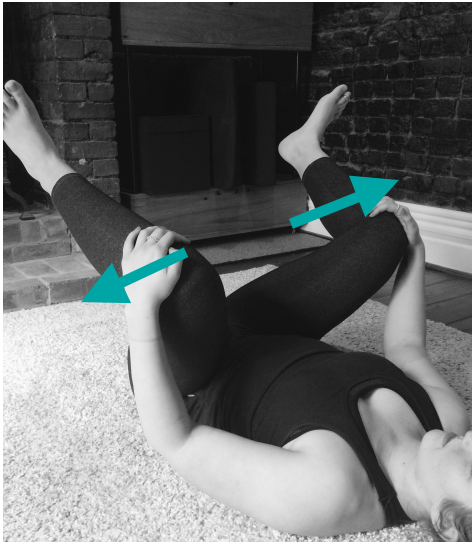
Start by sitting on the floor with one leg out in front. The other leg should be bent so that the sole of your foot is facing the inner part of your out stretched leg. Bend forward from the waist and interlock your fingers underneath the sole of your foot. Gently pull your foot back towards your head.



INNER THIGH STRETCH

Sit on the floor and bend both legs so that the soles of your feet are touching each other in front of you. Hold your legs just above the ankles and draw them towards your body whilst at the same time pushing your knees down towards the floor with your elbows.

Stretch Chart



ALTERNATE INNER THIGH STRETCH

Lay on the floor and bend both legs up towards your chest. Hold your legs just below the knees and draw them outward until you can feel the stretch on the inside of your thigh.



QUADRICEP STRETCH

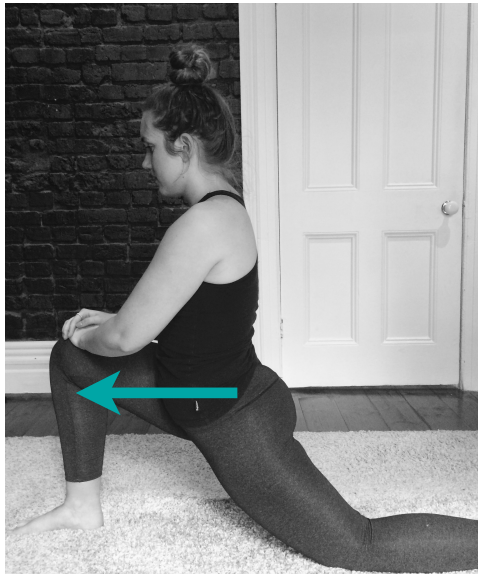
Stand about three feet from a wall, feet at shoulder width and flat on the ground. Put one hand on the wall and then bend one leg up towards your buttock holding onto it with your other hand. You should feel the stretch up the front of your thigh.



QUADRICEP STRETCH 2

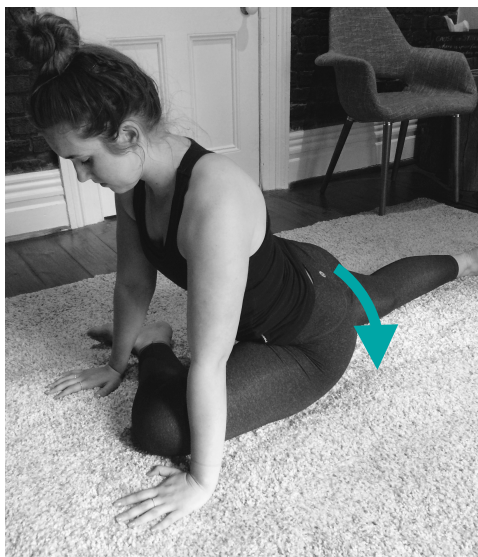
Stand in front a couch, seat or an ottoman against a wall. Lift one leg up and place your knee in the corner between the back support and the part you sit on. Have your foot resting up on the back support or wall. Gently move your body weight forward whilst keeping your torso up straight. You should feel the stretch in the upper aspect of the front of your thigh.

Stretch Chart



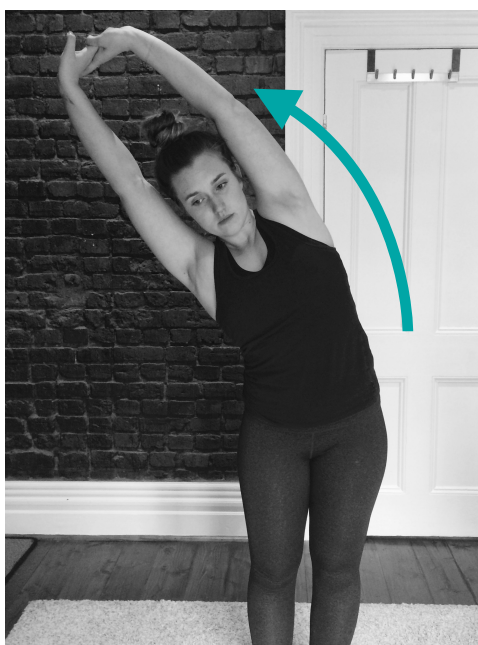
HIP FLEXOR STRETCH

Kneeling on the ground move one foot out in front of the other. Keeping your torso up straight gently move your bodyweight forward until you feel a stretch in the groin/upper part of your back leg.



GLUTEAL STRETCH

Kneeling on the ground move one leg forward and rotate it so that the outside of your ankle is laying on the ground and your leg is making a V shape. Gently move your body weight down through your buttock so you feel a stretch in the gluteal of the front leg.



SIDE STRETCH

Stand up tall, lift your arms in the air and grab on to one of your wrists. Gently bend your body to one side until you can feel the stretch from your arm all the way down the side of your torso.

Stretch Chart



OUTER HIP (TFL) STRETCH

Stand about half a metre from the wall with your body side on to the wall. Place the closest hand up on the wall and keep your elbow bent and pointed towards the floor. Bring the leg furthest from the wall across the front of your other leg, place your hand on your hip and push your pelvis towards the wall. You should feel a stretch in the outside region of the hip closest to the wall.



OUTER HIP (TFL) STRETCH- VARIATION 1

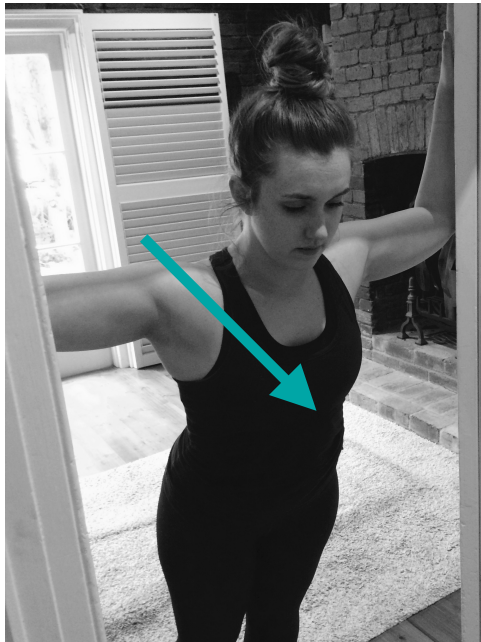
Same as the above stretch but turn your body 45 degrees TOWARDS the wall. You should now feel the stretch a little bit more around to the front of your hip region.



OUTER HIP (TFL) STRETCH- VARIATION 2

Same as the above stretch but turn your body 45 degrees AWAY from the wall. You should now feel the stretch a little bit more around to the back of your hip into your buttock region.

Stretch Chart



CHEST STRETCH

Stand facing towards and about 1 metre away from a doorway or the corner of a room. Bring your arms out so that they are level with your shoulders and place your hands on the door frame or wall. Gently lean in until you feel a stretch across the front of your shoulders and into your chest.



LAT STRETCH

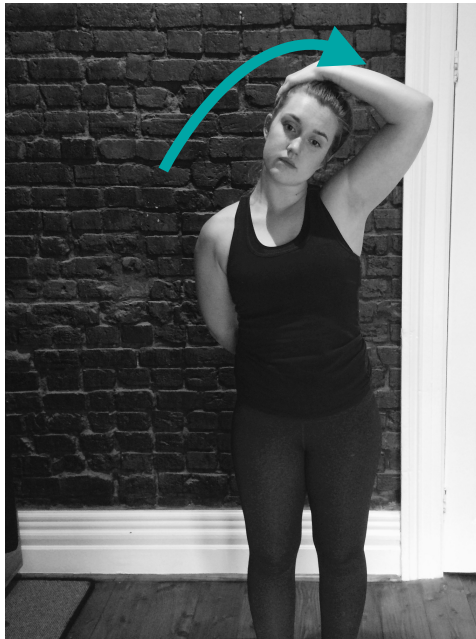
Stand next to an open door, pole or ledge. Grab onto the door jams/pole or ledge with both hands and move your body and hips backwards until you feel a stretch in your outer shoulder blade region.



OUTER SHOULDER STRETCH

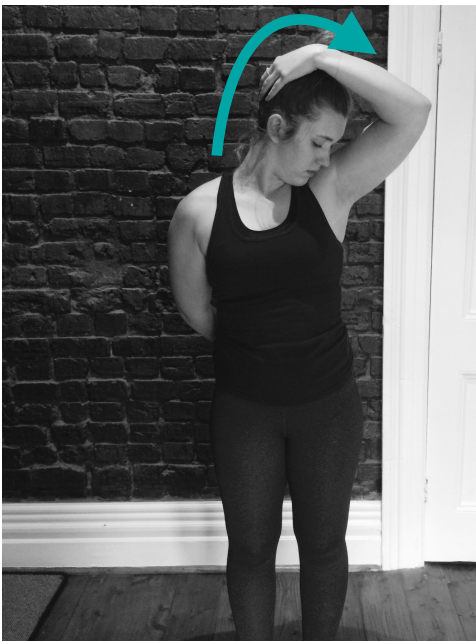
Standing or sitting bring one arm across the front of your body and grab onto it with your other arm. Pull your arm further across your body so you can feel a stretch in the shoulder region.

Stretch Chart



UPPER TRAP STRETCH

Standing or sitting place one hand underneath the buttock on the same side. With your other hand reach across and grab onto the opposite side of your head. Gently pull your head away from the anchored arm until you feel a stretch down the side of your neck.



LEVATOR SCAPULAE STRETCH

Standing or sitting place one hand underneath the buttock on the same side. Turn your head as far as you can to one side and with your other hand reach over and grab onto the back of your head. Gently pull your head away from the anchored arm so that your nose approximates your armpit. You should feel a stretch down the back of your neck.



WRIST & FINGER EXTENSORS STRETCH

Stand with the back of your wrists against your thighs. Grab onto one of your wrists with your other hand making sure your thumb is placed in the palm of the other hand. Bend the wrist upward and rotate your arm so that your fingers are moving towards the front .