

# STRETCH & FLEX Program



## Stretching improves flexibility and mobility.

**Stretch Smoothly:** Bouncing during a stretch invites muscles to respond by tightening up to protect themselves. Begin slowly and move smoothly. Work toward a position that starts to feel tight but never becomes painful.

**Pain is Not Good:** Feeling pain during a stretch is self-defeating. If you feel pain, you are working against the body's loosening-up mechanism. Always ease into your stretch; to do otherwise is to invite injury.

**Staying Loose:** As you stretch, it is important to keep your body relaxed. This can be accomplished by keeping your breathing even and consistent.

*Consult your physician before beginning any exercise program or if you have any questions about your ability to perform any stretch.*

### WARM-UP:

- 1 minute stationary walking.

### DYNAMIC WARM-UP:

Repeat each of the following movements 10 times.

#### Wrists:

- Move wrists up and down and rotate.

#### Shoulders:

- Alternate raising each arm overhead. Keep palms facing each other.

#### Side Bend:

- Reach up and over to the right or left. As you are reaching, let your heel come off the ground (alternate).

#### Trunk Twists:

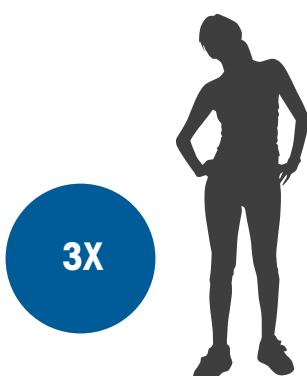
- As you twist: lift heel, and move slowly side to side.

#### Arm Circles:

- Start with arms raised.
- Slowly rotate in small circles.
- Gradually increase circle size while maintaining control.
- Change direction.

#### Ankle Circles

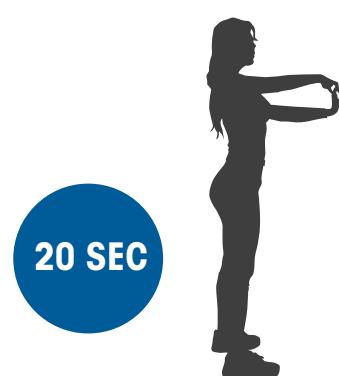
- Stand on one foot.
- Lift up other foot.
- Rotate lifted foot in small circles.
- Rotate clockwise and counter clockwise.



3X

### NECK STRETCH

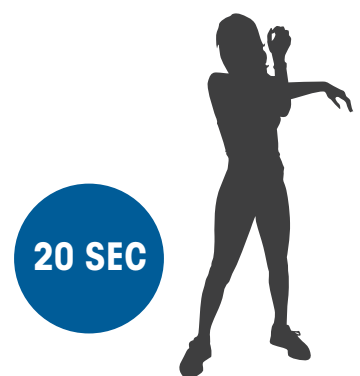
- Stand with feet shoulder width apart.
- Place hands on hips.
- Slowly and gently tilt to the left, front, right and back.
- Repeat other direction.



20 SEC

### WRIST STRETCH

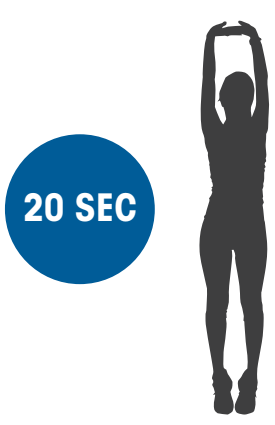
- Gently pull palm up.
- Pull back of hand down.



20 SEC

### SHOULDER STRETCH

- Place one arm across chest.
- Bend other arm and hold behind the elbow.



20 SEC

### ABDOMINAL STRETCH

- Interlock fingers overhead with palms facing upward.
- Reach as high as you can.
- First lean forward and then backward slightly.



3X

### BACK STRETCH

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Bend down, resting your hands on slightly bent knees.
- Look up, pointing your chin at the ceiling and creating an arch in your back.
- Take a deep breath. As you exhale, count to three; tuck your chin into your chest, and round your back.



20 SEC

### HAMSTRING STRETCH

- Stand up straight with one foot staggered slightly in front of the other.
- Slightly bend your left leg, putting hands on your left thigh.
- Extend your right leg, keeping your heel on the floor. Look straight ahead, hold and then switch.



20 SEC

### QUAD STRETCH

- Stand up straight with your feet slightly apart.
- Extend your left arm or use a wall (neighbor) for balance.
- Hold your right ankle with your right hand and pull up toward your back.
- Keep your body in alignment with your knees fairly close together.



20 SEC

### REACH HIGH

- Stand up straight with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Stretch your arms up over your head as high as you can.
- Spread your fingers.
- Take a deep breath, hold for 3 seconds and exhale (repeat 3 times).

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