

Reach for Health

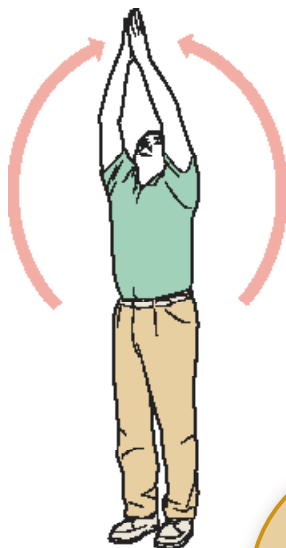
5 stretches you can fit in almost anywhere

Even if you get the recommended amount of exercise each week, you could be missing out on a host of benefits if you skip out on stretching. Flexibility training can help improve balance, relieve pain, reduce muscle tension, improve posture, decrease soreness and prevent injury. And you don't even need to tack any extra time to your workout routine. Here are five stretches that you can do at work—or just about anywhere.



SEATED SPINAL TWIST

Sit in a straight-backed chair with your feet propped a few inches off the ground. Cross your arms over your chest and gently twist your upper body as far to one side as you can. Hold for five to 30 seconds. Then twist to the other side.

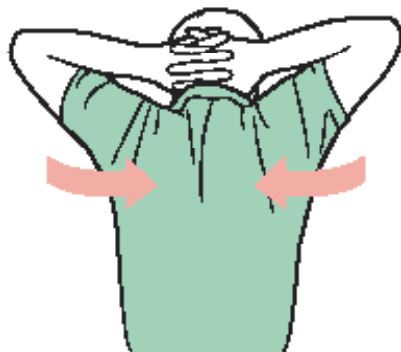


STRETCH AND REACH

With your arms at your side, stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Slightly bend your knees and raise your arms out to the side and above your head. Bring your hands together so that your palms are touching, and look up at them. Hold for five to 30 seconds.

SEATED LOWER-BACK STRETCH

In a straight-backed chair, sit with your arms at your side. Press the small of your back into the chair, and bend forward at the waist and reach toward the floor. Rest your head on your knees and hold for five to 30 seconds. Come up slowly.



SHOULDER STRETCH

Place hands behind your head and interlace your fingers. Holding elbows straight out to each side, pull your shoulder blades toward each other. Hold for eight to 10 seconds, then relax and repeat several times.

Be sure to complete these exercises in a pain-free range.



ANKLE STRETCH

While sitting or standing, lift your foot off the floor and rotate your ankle 10 to 12 times, first clockwise and then counterclockwise. Repeat with the other ankle.

Source: AARP



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