

Stretching to prevent injury



Make time for this easy routine to help improve your flexibility.

Whether you'll be climbing poles, carrying drywall, or sitting behind the wheel, starting your day with a good stretch can reduce the risk of injury while you work. Regular stretching helps prevent and relieve muscle and joint stiffness. Over time, it can also support better circulation, posture, and flexibility.

Perform each stretch shown here in a slow, controlled manner and hold it for 30 seconds. Go through the routine before you begin work—and any time you need to loosen up during the day. You'll feel better, you'll work better, and you'll decrease your chances of getting hurt on the job.

Before you start

- Consider talking to your healthcare provider before beginning any new stretching routine, especially if you have preexisting health concerns.
- If you're not used to exercising, ease into a morning stretching routine slowly.
- Stretching should not be painful. Stop stretching immediately if you feel sharp or shooting pain.



Chest stretch

Increases flexibility and improves posture

1. Clasp hands behind back and squeeze shoulder blades together.
2. Bring arms and elbows up behind you as far as possible.
3. Hold, then slowly return to original position.



Overhead stretch

Stretches back and core, and eases soreness

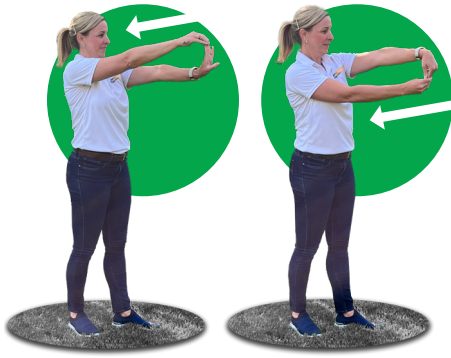
1. Stand upright with feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Raise arms above head. Interlace fingers with palms facing upward, keeping elbows straight.
3. Slowly move arms backward until you feel a moderate, painless stretch.



Standing forward bend

Relieves tightness in back, buttocks, and hamstrings

1. Stand upright, then bend forward at hips. Bend knees slightly, if necessary.
2. Let head and arms hang down, with fingers reaching toes.
3. Hold, then *s/owly* return to standing position.



Wrist extension and reflexion

Relieves tightness in forearms and wrists, and improves mobility

1. Stretch arm forward and slowly point fingers up until you feel a stretch.
2. Using other hand, pull fingers toward you to slightly increase pressure.
3. Release, then point fingers down and pull them slightly towards you.
4. Repeat both stretches with opposite arm.



Hamstring stretch

Improves posture and helps prevent lower back pain

1. Stand upright with left leg forward and toes pointing up.
2. Bend right knee slightly, then lean forward, keeping head aligned with spine.
3. Place hands on the straight (left) leg, keeping spine straight.
4. Stay in this position and repeat stretch with right leg forward.



Lateral neck stretch

Helps loosen tissue from skull down to shoulders

1. Facing forward, tilt head to the left.
2. Reach with left hand and apply downward pressure to side of head.
3. Repeat stretch in opposite direction.



Hip flexor

Improves hip mobility and relieves pain

1. Stand with hands on hips, then move left leg back, keeping heel off ground.
2. Bend right knee while keeping left leg straight. Do not bend knee past toes.
3. Feel the stretch in the left hip.
4. Repeat with opposite leg.



Side bend

Stretches spine and promotes better posture

1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Raise left arm over head and bend upper body to the right (while continuing to face forward).
3. Repeat stretch in opposite direction.