



## Ergonomics: The benefits of stretching

### Remember

These are just a few stretches you can take advantage of throughout the day to keep your blood flowing and help prevent injury. And don't forget – the benefits of stretching can be achieved both at work and home.

Taking time to stretch throughout the day can be beneficial to your health. Stretching helps increase blood flow and oxygen to your extremities and warms and loosens your muscles and tendons. It can help reduce sprain, strains and your risk of ergonomic injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome or tendonitis. Plus, it helps relieve stress and gives your body time to recover from muscle fatigue.

### The basics of stretching

- Pain is not gain – you should only stretch until you feel a mild tension that relaxes as you hold the stretch
- If a stretch begins to hurt, ease up on the amount of stretch and quit if you can't do it without pain
- Stretches should be held for 5 to 30 seconds – you should not be bouncing
- Breathe deeply and slowly while performing stretches
- Consult your doctor before starting a stretching program if you have recently had surgery or any muscle or joint problems

### Sample stretches

**Eyes:** Periodically take time to close your eyes for a minute at a time and then focus on an object at least 20 feet away

**Neck:** With your head straight and in line with your shoulder, turn completely to the left and hold, then turn back to the center – do this on both sides 5 times each

**Shoulders:** With your arms close to your sides while standing, slowly roll the shoulders backwards in large circles for 10 seconds – reverse direction and repeat

**Wrists:** With your arm straight out, grasp the involved hand and slowly bend the wrist down until a stretch is felt and hold for 20 seconds – repeat 4 times with each hand

**Overhead stretch:** Standing with legs shoulder width apart, interlace your fingers in front of you with palms out and slowly straighten the arms and raise them over your head holding for 10 seconds – repeat 3 times

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