STRETCHING EXERCISES

Stretching can help prepare your body for work. When stretching regularly you can help prevent sprain and strain injuries. You can do this by targeting muscles that you use on a daily basis. When stretching is not done regularly the muscles shorten and you are at higher risk of injury then someone who stretches on a regular basis.

Stretching should be done slowly and without bouncing. Each stretch should be held for between 20 – 30 seconds. Each exercise should be repeated twice with a break in between to allow time for your muscles to relax. Remember, when you are stretching, do not make sudden or quick movements or else this could cause an injury. Stretching should not be painful but rather you should feel slight tension in the muscles. Remember to remain relaxed when stretching.

Below are several stretches that can help your tense muscles!

**Neck Stretching**
Tilt your head to the side without twisting your neck and use your hand to reach across and move towards your shoulder. Do not pull hard; rather use the weight of your arm. Another way to stretch your neck is to slowly rotate your neck in circular motion with no jerks or sudden movements.

**Shoulder Rolls**
1. Roll your shoulders in a circular motion towards your chest. Then repeat in the opposite direction. Remember to do this in a slow smooth motion.

**Chest Stretching**
1. Clasp your hands behind your back, push your chest forward and pull your shoulders back.

**Forearms Stretching**
Extend your arm forward and keep your elbow straight. Point your fingers upward and gently pull back with the other hand. Then repeat with the other hand.
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**Triceps Stretching**
Point your arm up in the air and bend at the elbow so your hand is behind your head. Gently pull down on your elbow towards your head.

**Shoulder and Triceps Stretching**
Put your hand on the opposite shoulder. Reach across with the other arm and pull elbow towards your chest. Then repeat with the other arm.

**Calf Stretch**
Bend the front leg and try to push your back leg heel to the ground.

**Lower Back Stretching**
Stand with your feet approximately shoulder width apart. Twist and lean forward to touch your toes with the opposite hand and extend the other arm in the air behind you. Remember not to make any sudden movements or bouncing motions.

**General Back Stretching**
Use a wall or a solid surface and twist the upper body slowly until you feel a slight stretch in the back. Complete exercise in both directions.
**Hamstring Stretching**

Stand with your feet together. Bend over and with both arms touch your toes or the floor in front of your toes. There are a variety of different ways to stretch the hamstring. Below are a variety of different ways to stretch.

![Hamstring Stretching Diagrams]

**Quadriceps Stretching**

Lift up your leg behind you and grab your ankle with your hand. Pull up on the ankle to stretch out the quadriceps. Please remember to hold onto something if you cannot maintain your balance.

![Quadriceps Stretching Diagrams]