



Staying Flexible, Staying Fit: *The Importance of Stretching*

Along with cardiovascular fitness and muscular strength and endurance, stretching (flexibility) is another core component of a fitness program. Stretching enhances your fitness and overall health by:

- **Enhancing circulation** - Stretching increases blood flow to your muscles. This helps prepare your body for activity and helps protect you from injury.
- **Good range of motion promotes better balance** - Which is increasingly important as we age, and also allows you to perform more comfortably and effectively.
- **Promoting better posture** - A regular stretching routine keeps muscles from getting tight, allowing you to maintain proper posture (sitting and standing), and minimize associated aches and pains.
- **Increasing flexibility** - At any age, being flexible allows you to perform your activities of daily living with greater ease.
- **Relieving stress** - Stretching is relaxing and it feels good!

When stretching, be sure to:

- **Warm up first** - Stretching cold muscles can increase your risk of injury.
- **Target all major muscle groups** - Stretch the muscles that you routinely use at work or play.
- **Stay pain-free** - Expect to feel some mild tension while stretching. If you hurt, back off to the point where you don't feel any pain, then hold the stretch from that position.
- **Do static stretching and don't bounce** - Gently hold your position for 30 seconds. (Build up slowly if you're new to your routine.)
- **Be safe** - Check with your doctor if you have questions.

Relax, breathe freely, and enjoy!



**STAY
FLEXIBLE**

**STAY
FIT**

Treatment Disclaimer: This poster is for education purposes, not for use in the treatment of medical conditions. It is based on skilled medical opinion as of the date of publication. However, medical science advances and changes rapidly. Furthermore, diagnosis and treatment are often complex and involve more than one disease process or medical issue to determine proper care. If you believe you may have a medical condition described in the poster, consult your doctor.

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