Leg Stretches

Calf Stretch
Step back with one leg. Press the back heel into the ground while leaning forward until you feel a stretch in the back of our calf. Hold.

Hamstring Stretch
Step forward with one leg keeping it straight. Slowly lean forward while keeping your back straight, shoulders back and chin up. When you feel a stretch in the back of the forward leg, stop and hold.

Quadiceps Stretch
Bend your knee and grasp ankle with one or both hands. Point your knee down. Gently, pull your ankle toward your back until you feel a stretch in the front of your leg and hold.

Stretching Guidelines

- Stretch daily before work, after breaks, and periodically throughout the day.
- Complete stretches slowly, smoothly, and under control.
- Maintain balance and posture while stretching.
- Focus on breathing and relaxed movement.
- Stretch to a comfortable tension
- Do not stretch to a point of pain and avoid straining and bouncing.
- Hold each stretch for 10-15 seconds.
- Be sure to stretch both sides.

Why is Stretching Important?

Stretching increases flexibility. Flexible muscles can improve your performance in daily activities so that tasks such as lifting objects or getting dressed easier and less tiring.

Stretching improves range of motion. Good range of motion in your joints keeps you in better balance, which will help you stay mobile and less likely to fall.

Stretching improves circulation. Stretching increases blood flow to your muscles. Improves circulation can speed recovery after muscle injuries.

Stretching relieves stress. Stretching relaxes the tense muscles that often accompany stress.

References
**Back Stretches**

**Low Back Hamstring Stretch**
Bend forward at the waist keeping the back and the legs straight. Place the hands just below the knees with the arms straight. Bring the shoulders back and hold.

**Back Bend**
Place your hands on your hips or low back. Gently lean back and lift your chest.

**Side Bend**
Place the feet just wider than shoulder width apart. Stand up tall, relax your shoulders then slowly slide one hand down the side of your leg until you feel a stretch on the opposite side and hold.

**Trunk & Shoulder Stretches**

**Trunk Rotation**
Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent and bring your arms up behind your head. Slowly twist upper body to one side while keeping your pelvis facing the same direction as the feet. Keep the movement slow and controlled, only rotating as far as your flexibility will allow, and hold.

**High Reach Stretch**
Keep your feet flat on the floor. Reach both arms above head. Open hands and spread fingers. Reach until a stretch is felt through back, ribs and shoulder and hold.

**Shoulder Shrug**
Begin with shoulders relaxed. Raise both shoulders toward the ears and gently squeeze. Hold for a few seconds. Relax. Repeat.

**Shoulder Stretch**
Bring arm across body at chest level. Keep chest up. Gently pull arm towards body with opposite arm until stretch is felt through shoulder. Hold.

**Chest & Neck Stretches**

**Chest Stretch**
Place both hands behind head. Keep back and neck straight and your chest up. Reach your elbows backwards until you feel a stretch through your chest. Hold.

**Neck Stretch, Side**
Place one hand on top of your head while looking forward. Gently move your ear toward shoulder. Stop when you feel a stretch on the opposite side of your neck and hold.

**Neck Rotation**
Begin by looking straight ahead with shoulders relaxed. Turn head and look over shoulder until you feel a stretch in your neck and hold.

**Neck Stretch, Front**
Begin by looking straight ahead with shoulders relaxed. Raise chin toward ceiling and tilt head back until stretch is felt in front of neck and hold.

**Neck Stretch, Back**
Begin by looking straight ahead with shoulders relaxed. Bring chin towards chest until a stretch is felt in the back of your neck and hold.

**Arm, Wrist & Hand Stretches**

**Forearm Rotation**
Stand with both arms comfortably at your side. Make a fist with each hand and rotate your wrist back away from you so that your knuckles will point toward you and hold.

**Wrist and Forearm Stretches**
First, reach one arm in front of body keeping the arm straight. Bend wrist to point fingers up. With opposite hand apply gentle pressure in palm and fingers until stretch is felt on the palm side of wrist and forearm. Hold. Second keeping the arm straight, bend wrist to point the fingers down. With opposite hand apply gentle pressure on back of hand until stretch is felt on the opposite side of wrist. Hold.

**Hand Stretch**
Reach both arms in front of body. Make a fist and hold. Then slowly open fist, spreading fingers, and hold.