

# The Exercise and Physical Fitness Page



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## Flexibility

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## Flex Appeal

*Like aerobic endurance and muscle strength, flexibility provides anti-aging benefits.*

**Who:** Everyone can learn to stretch, regardless of age or flexibility.

**When:** ANY time is a good time

- In the morning
- After sitting or standing for long periods
- Any time you feel tense or stiff
- At odd times like watching T.V., reading, or sitting and talking

**Why:** *As you age, your muscles tighten and range of motion in a joint can be minimized. This can put a halt to active lifestyles and even hinder day- to- day , normal motions. A regular stretching program can help lengthen your muscles and restore youthful activity.*

- To relax your mind and "tune up" your body
- To preserve range of motion
- To maintain flexibility
- To prevent injury during exercise
- To prepare the muscles for more vigorous activity
- To help develop body awareness
- To promote circulation

**How:**

**Frequency:** *At least 3 days per week*

**Intensity:** *To a position of mild discomfort*

**Duration:** *Hold stretch for 10 seconds working up to 30 seconds*

**Repetitions:** *Perform 3-5 for each stretch*

- Stretch slowly and smoothly; Never bounce
- Maintain normal breathing during each movement
- Focus attention on muscle being stretched; try to limit movement in other body parts
- Feel the stretch, but don't strain by stretching too far

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## Everyday Stretches

*Use these stretches daily, to fine-tune your muscles. This is a general routine that emphasizes stretching the muscles that are most frequently used in normal day-to-day activities.*

## **1. *The "Spinal Twist"***

*While seated, extend the left leg in front of you. Bend your right leg, placing your right foot on the outside of the left knee. Extend your right arm behind you to support your body. Place the left arm on the outside of the right leg. Slightly twist the torso using your left arm until you feel the stretch in your side. Hold for 10-30 seconds. Stretch the other side.*



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## **2. *Hamstring Stretch***

*While seated, extend your left leg in front of you. Bend your right leg, placing the bottom of your foot on the inside of the left knee. Place your right hand on top of your left hand. While keeping the lower back straightened, reach toward your left foot. Hold this for 10-30 seconds. During this stretch, keep the foot of the straight leg upright with the ankle and toes relaxed. Repeat for the right leg.*



### **3. Calf Stretch**

*While standing, place your left foot near the wall. Bend forearms and rest them against the wall. Keeping the right foot flat on the floor, move right leg back until you feel the stretch in the calf muscle. Hold an easy stretch for 10-30 seconds. Do not bounce. Stretch the other leg.*



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### **4. Chest Stretch**

*Place flat palm of right arm against a wall. Slowly rotate forward until you feel the stretch in your chest. Hold the stretch for 10-30 seconds. Stretch the other side.*



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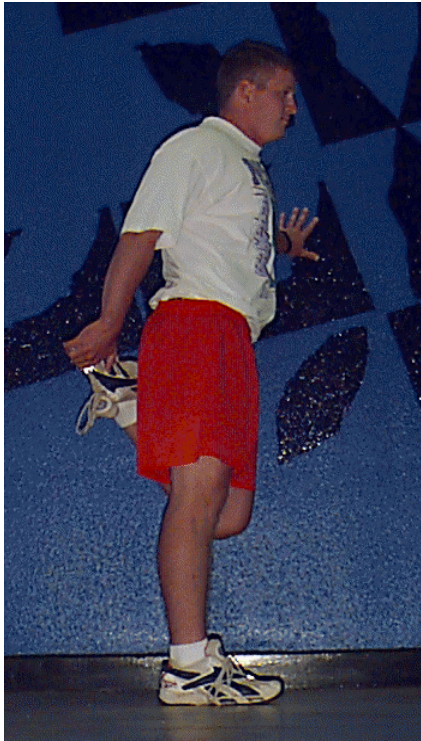
### 5. *Shoulder Stretch*

*Extend your left arm in front of your body. Using the left wrist, place the right wrist underneath and pull inward toward your body, while keeping the left arm extended. Hold for 10-30 seconds. Stretch the other side.*



## 6. *Quadriceps Stretch*

*Supporting your body with your left arm against a solid object, grab your left toes with right arm. Pull your heel up to your buttocks until you feel the stretch in your thigh. Hold for 10-30 seconds. Stretch the other side.*



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## 7. *Forearm Stretch*

*Extend your right arm. Using your left hand, pull your finger tips back toward your body until you feel the stretch in your forearm. Hold the stretch for 10-30 seconds. Repeat using the other arm.*



## 8. *Triceps Stretch*

*Bend the right arm while placing your fingers in the middle of the back. Using the left arm, pull your right elbow backward until you feel the stretch in the back of your arm. Hold it for 10-30 seconds. Stretch the other side.*



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## 9. *Inner Thigh Stretch*

*While seated, pull both feet inward toward the body. Grab your feet with your hands, while using the elbows to press downward slightly on the knees. You should feel this stretch in your inner thighs. Hold for 10-30 seconds.*



## 10. "Cat" (Back) Stretch

*To stretch the upper back, hands and knees should be on the floor. Just as a cat would do, slowly lift your back up toward the ceiling and hold in place for 10-30 seconds.*



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The Exercise and Physical Fitness Web Page is an ongoing project by graduate students in the Master of Science program in Exercise Science in the Department of Kinesiology and Health at Georgia State University. This project was created by J. Andrew Doyle, PhD, and was last modified on: January 05, 1998.