Take Care of YOU

A Health and Wellness Bulletin | August 2023

Stretch into your Best Health

Many people participate in some kind of physical activity such as weight training or cardio, but there's a third element that many of us neglect — stretching. Adding gentle stretching into your daily routine has a cumulative effect on your overall health and wellness. Aim for daily stretching, but if that feels unattainable, even five to ten minutes two or three times a week can have beneficial effects.

- **Increases flexibility and joint range of motion.** Having flexible muscles allows for freedom of movement to perform everyday activities that can become more difficult with age.

- **Decreases risk of injury.** A regular stretching routine can help prevent injuries, muscle strains, and tension headaches. It also helps improve balance which can prevent falls.

- **Protects mobility and independence.** Engaging in a regular stretching routine helps delay reduced mobility that often comes with aging, resulting in greater independence in the later years of life.

- **Improves posture.** Muscle imbalances can lead to poor posture, which your body treats like an injury. Strengthening and stretching your muscle groups will promote proper alignment.

- **Relieves stress.** With stress comes muscle tension. To calm both body and mind, focus on stretching areas where you tend to hold your stress, such as your neck, shoulders, and back.

Turn stretching into a safe and healthy habit using these five tips:

- **Habit stack.** Add a few minutes of gentle stretching each time you do another activity, such as refilling your water.

- **Don't stretch cold muscles.** Cold muscles are not as pliable, so it's best to build stretching into your post-workout routine.

- **Don't bounce or stretch to the point of pain.** Stretch in a smooth movement until you feel moderate tension, and hold for 30 seconds.

- **Give it time.** Your muscles didn't get tight overnight, so they aren't going to loosen overnight either. Stay committed to see results.

- **Talk to your doctor.** Consult with a doctor or physical therapist for recommended stretching techniques, especially if you have a chronic condition or pre-existing injury.

Top Stretching Apps of 2023

- StretchIt *(iOS and Android)*
- Stretch & Flexibility at Home *(iOS)*
- Start Stretching *(iOS)*
- Bend *(iOS and Android)*
- Pliability *(iOS)*
- Splits Training *(iOS and Android)*