

Healthy Living Newsletter

JANUARY 2011

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 1



Health & Wellness Events

See your local
Occ Health Manager
and Wellness Champions
for information about
Health & Wellness activities
this month in your facility

Stretching Tips

Stretching needs to be performed properly to be beneficial. Here are some tips to help ensure you are stretching properly:

- Stretching should be performed a minimum of three days per week in order to improve and maintain flexibility.
- You may hurt yourself if you stretch cold muscles. Warm up first by walking while gently pumping your arms, or do a favorite exercise at a low intensity for five to ten minutes.
- Never force a stretch beyond the point of tension. You should never feel pain when stretching.
- Never throw your body into a stretch or bounce when stretching. Stretching should be fluid and gentle.
- Breathe slowly when stretching. Do not hold your breath when stretching.

Sources: www.mayoclinic.com
and www.functional-fitness-facts.com

Stretch!

Stretching is important for people of all ages! One of the greatest benefits of stretching is that you are able to increase your range of motion, which means your limb and joints can move further before an injury occurs.

Stretching...

- **Increases flexibility.** Flexible muscles can improve your daily performance.
- **Improves range of motion of your joints.** Good range of motion keeps you in better balance, which helps keep you mobile and less prone to falls—and related injuries—especially as you age.
- **Improves circulation.** Stretching increases blood flow to your muscles. Improved circulation can speed up your recovery after muscle injuries.
- **Can relieve stress.**
- **Can eliminate low back pain.** Low back pain is one of the most common kinds of structural pain and it affects a large percentage of the world population.
- **Is good for the heart.**
- **Feels good and is relaxing.** Stretching is a good way to cool down and relax after a workout.
- **Reduces the risk of having a second heart attack** in people who already had one heart attack.
- **Lowers the risk of developing high blood pressure.**
- **Increases energy levels,** as a result of increased circulation.

Sources: UPS Road Map to Health, www.mayoclinic.com, www.functional-fitness-facts.com

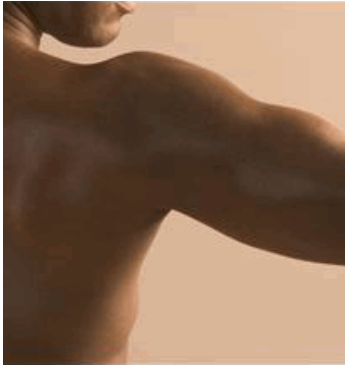
Everyday Stretches

Here is a sample of the many stretching exercises that are available for you to try. Check the attached sources for instructions on the exercises.

- Spinal twist
- Hamstring stretch
- Kneeling hamstring stretch
- Calf stretch
- Chest stretch
- Shoulder stretch
- Quadriceps stretch
- Forearm stretch
- Triceps stretch
- Inner thigh stretch
- “Cat” (back) stretch
- Lunge stretch
- Piriformis stretch
- Hip/glute stretch
- Knees to chest



Sources: exercise.about.com/cs/flexibility/i/blstretch.htm
and www2.gsu.edu/~wwwfit/flexibility.html



Muscle Groups

To increase flexibility, include these muscle groups in your stretching routine:

- **Shoulders.** Deltoid and rotator cuff
- **Back.** Muscles of the lower, middle, and upper back
- **Thighs.** Hamstring and quad
- **Calves.** Gastrocnemius and soleus
- **Arms.** Biceps, triceps, and forearm

Source: UPS Road Map to Health

Stress Reduction Techniques

- **Exercise, exercise, exercise.** Physical exercise not only promotes overall fitness—it also helps you manage emotional stress and tension.
- **Relaxation and meditation.** Examples include utogenic training, biofeedback, meditation, Qigong, Tai chi and yoga.
- **Progressive muscle relaxation.** Reduce anxiety by alternately tensing and relaxing your muscles.
- **Massage therapy.** Science reveals there's a lot more to it than just a relaxing rubdown.
- **Visualization.** Techniques such as guided imagery use the power of imagination as a potent healer.
- **Hobbies.** Try gardening, painting, drawing, or playing a musical instrument.
- **Daydream:** Take a brief vacation in your mind.

Sources: www.medicinenet.com and health-psychology.suite101.com

Get Your Kids Moving

As a parent, you have an important role in shaping your child's physical activities attitudes and behaviors. Here are some tips to encourage your children to be more physically active.

Outdoors

- Form a “family health club” that meets once a week to do an activity in the community. Some examples are bike rides, swimming in a recreational pool, or organizing a game of floor hockey.
- See if the local museum or historical society has a brochure of historical walks in your neighborhood or town. Go out and explore together.
- Go bird watching. See how many birds that you can spot.
- Take a moonlight or flashlight walk in the evening. Go stargazing.
- Make a family commitment to try a new activity each season. Try activities such as snowshoeing, curling, fishing, or in-line skating. Many clubs and organizations can introduce you to something you have never tried before.
- Challenge your children to a basketball, volleyball, tennis, or baseball game. They will love the idea of playing and competing against you.
- Make physical activity fun. Allow your children to include friends when planning some physical activities. This will encourage their peers to be active as well.
- When your children are learning to ride a bicycle, put on your running shoes and run along side them. Support them and teach them proper bicycle safety while running with them around the block.
- Encourage your children to be active during their recess and lunch. Make sure that they are dressed appropriately and have proper footwear for running around.
- Dig into gardening! Plant a garden and get everyone to help out with their own special section.
- Go for a family walk with a dog or borrow a dog from a friend.
- On a windy day, go to an open field and fly a kite.
- Plan a family hike through a scenic park.

Indoors

- Select indoor activities that offer some type of physical activity. Bowling, skating, or touring a museum are better choices than seeing a movie.
- Limit the time your children watch TV, play video games, or surf the Internet to no more than two hours per day. If you have teens, set guidelines about sedentary pursuits like chatting on the phone or text messaging. For every hour they watch, get a commitment for equal time engaged in physical activity. Make the same guidelines for yourself as well.

Games

- Go for a family walk and make it a scavenger hunt. Have each of your children collect common things such as a round rock, a leaf, or a pinecone.
- Check out a book from the library about games from around the world. Try a game you have never played before.
- Encourage informal play. Organized sports have value, but it is important for your children to “play” on their own. Playing house, building a fort, or putting together a show—all are ways to engage the brain and body.
- Play actively with your kids. They will



enjoy having you as an active role model.

Source: UPS Road Map to Health