

Industrial Athlete Stretching

IMPACC Worksmart Functional Flexibility Stretching Poster from St. Luke's Health System

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Frequent stretching is important to keep a proper blood supply to your working muscles and tissues throughout the day to prevent fatigue and/or discomfort.

Guidelines

- Perform the stretches two to three times per day, or up to every hour, as determined by your body's fatigue/discomfort level.
- Stretches should never be forced and never cause any pain. Some discomfort is expected but NO pain.
- Don't bounce at the end of any stretch as this significantly increases the risks for sprains/strains.
- You may be sore for the first 2-4 weeks after beginning this daily stretching program. To help reduce this soreness drink water daily, do aerobic exercise, and stretch again to get rid of your body's lactic acids which cause fatigue, discomfort and pain.

STRETCHES

Reach for the Sky

- Stand up tall and reach with both arms up to the sky, with one hand gripped around your opposite wrist. Look straight up towards your hands. (photo 1a)
- When your arms are fully extended hold for 3 to 5 seconds, then gently sidebend your trunk to the left side (photo 1b) and hold for 3-5 seconds, then to the right side and hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat 2-3 times.
- Great stretch to reduce upper back/neck and shoulder fatigue and stress.



*If you have any problems or questions,
please call your doctor's office (8am-5pm).*

Answering service for after hours.

8270 WILLOW OAKS CORPORATE
DRIVE, SUITE 700
FAIRFAX, VA 22031
P 703.810.5228 | F 571.407.5659
ORTHOVIRGINIA.COM

Cat Back Stretch

- Stand and reach with both arms straight out in front of you at shoulder level. Gently hold both hands together.
- Arch your back forward and hold this position for 3-5 seconds. (photo 2a)
- Add sidebending and rotation towards your left side and hold for 3-5 seconds (photo 2b) and then repeat on your right side.
- Repeat 2 times.
- Great stretch to reduce upper back/between shoulder blades/fatigue/stress and soreness.



Standing Trunk Extension (Backward Bend)

- Standing up tall, put your hands on your hips/lower back. While looking straight ahead, gently bend backwards and hold for 3-5 seconds. (photo 3)
- Repeat 3-5 times.
- One of the most important stretches to prevent lower back injury and reduce fatigue and pain to the lower back.
- Do frequently throughout the workday, at least every hour if you sit for most of your workday.
- A great tweak to this stretch is to look back and over your shoulder, holding for 3-5 seconds, and to do this towards the side of pain in your lower back/hips/buttock muscles.



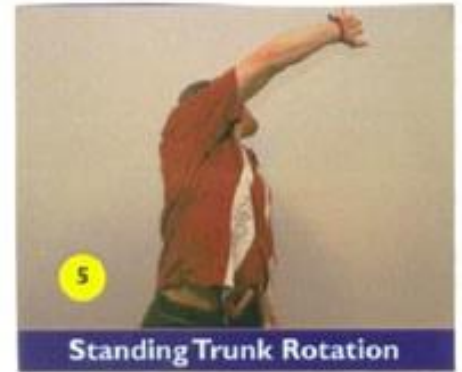
Standing Trunk Sidebend

- Stand up tall and bend toward your left side, reaching with your right hand overhead. (photo 4)
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat on the other side, bending toward your right side with your left arm overhead and holding for 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat 2 times.
- If you feel any pain in your lower back and/or shoulder, bring your arms down and place them on your hips.



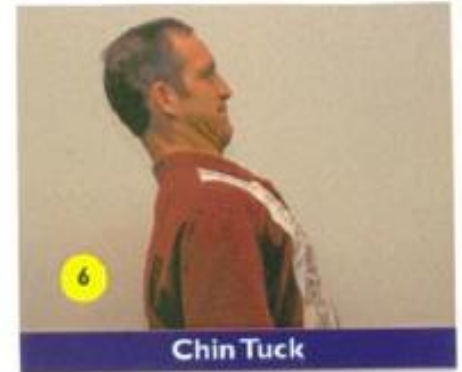
Standing Trunk Rotation

- Stand up tall and reach with your right hand over your left shoulder, twisting your body towards the left side. (photo 5)
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Now reach with your left hand over your right shoulder, twisting your body to the right and holding for 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat 2 times.



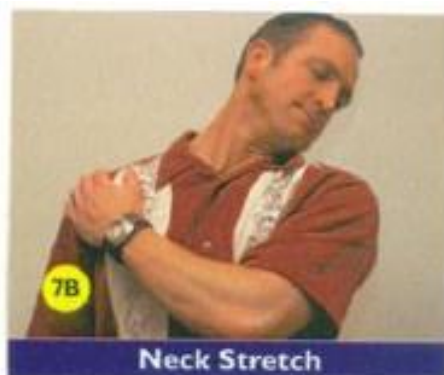
Chin Tuck

- Stand up tall as in military attention, keeping your chin tucked down while looking straight ahead. (photo 6)
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat 2-5 times.
- You can do this either with or without your hand as a guide.
- Don't push on your jaw as this can stress your TMJ joint.
- Best stretch to get rid of your headaches.
- You can tweak this stretch by adding extension and/or looking over your shoulder towards the side of pain. Jump bump into the pain and slower back off, and repeat until your headaches are gone.



Neck Stretch (3 positions, A, B, and C)

- Place your left hand on top of your right shoulder.
- Gently pull down and tip your head toward your left shoulder while looking straight ahead. (photo 7a)
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat other side.
- With left hand holding right shoulder down, gently look down and over toward your left shoulder. (photo 7b)
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat other side.
- With left hand holding right shoulder down, tip your head toward your left shoulder and then gently look back over your right shoulder and/or twist your head to the right side. (photo 7c)
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat other side.
- Repeat entire sequence one time.
- This is a great stretch to do first thing in the morning in a warm shoulder to reduce neck/shoulder stiffness.



Wrist Stretch

- Hold right arm out in front of your at shoulder level, fully extended, with palm up.
- With your left hand gently pull your right fingers back (all fingers, except the thumb), to feel a good stretch to your right forearm. (photo 8a)
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Pull your fingers across the front of your body (photo 8b)

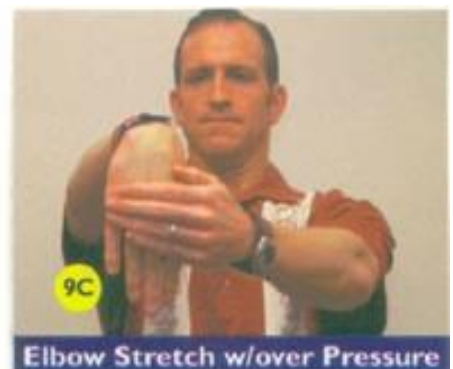
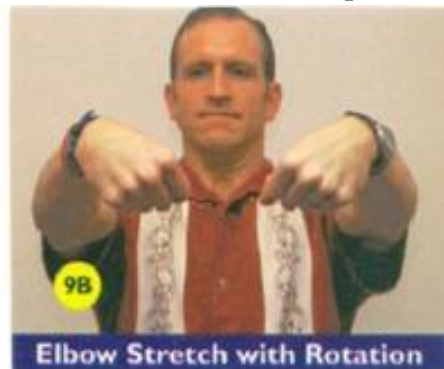
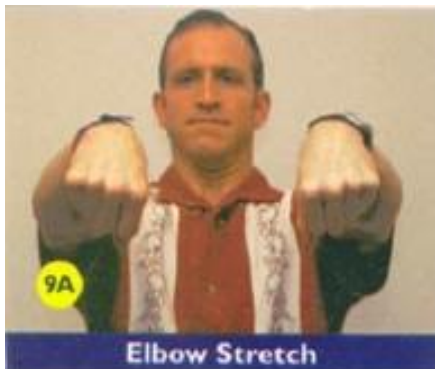
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Rotate your hand to the outside (no photo)
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat other side.
- Repeat 1-2 times.
- Great stretch to reduce wrist/hand/forearm fatigue. Do this stretch frequently, especially for your dominant hand.



Elbow Stretch

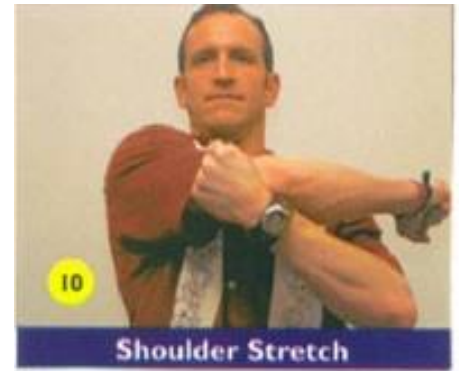
- Hold both arms out in front of you at shoulder level with palms facing the floor.
- Make a fist with both hands and tip both your fists down towards the floor (photo 9a).
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- You will feel the stretch on the back of your forearms. This is a great stretch to prevent to treat tennis elbow/tendinitis of the elbow.
- Turn your fists in toward each other. (photo 9b)

- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Hold your right arm out in front of you with palm down and finger extended (out straight).
- With your left hand, gently pull your fingers back until you feel a forearm stretch.
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Add rotation to the inside and outside, holding for 3-5 seconds at each position.
- Repeat 1-2 times.



Shoulder Stretch (posterior capsule)

- Reach your right arm directly across the front of your body at shoulder level.
- With your left arm gently give an overpressure to your right arm, just above your right elbow.
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat other side.
- Repeat 1 time.
- You can tweak this exercise by changing the angle of your shoulder across your body, either above or below shoulder level.



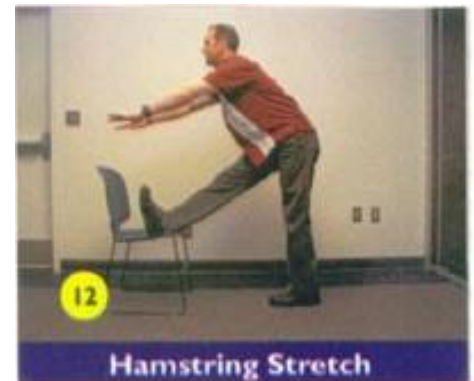
Doorway Chest Stretch

- Stand in a doorway with your feet staggered (one in front of the other), your arms bent up at the elbow to be perpendicular to the floor and on either side of the doorway, and looking straight ahead.
- Hold this position for 3-5 seconds.
- Tweak this stretch by turning your head to the right, hold for 3-5 seconds, then turning to the left side and holding for 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat 2-3 times.
- Switch your feet so they are staggered the other way and repeat the same number of times.
- If this posture of your shoulders and arms hurts/bothers your shoulders, just hold your arms down away from your sides with elbows straight and palms facing the door.
- This is a great stretch to really reduce stiffness to your neck/chest/shoulders/trunk and hips.



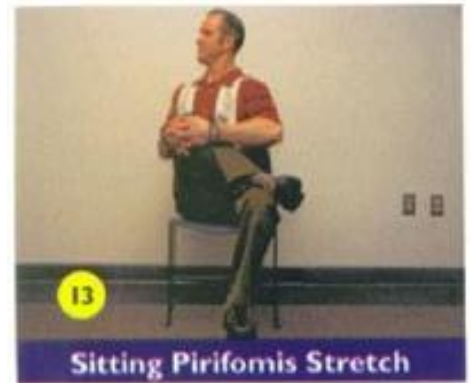
Hamstring Stretch

- Stand up and extend your right leg in front of you onto a chair or stairs.
- Gently pull the toes of your right foot back towards your head.
- Reach both of your arms in front of you towards your feet. (Photo 12) To help your balance and safety, you may want to do this stretch by a table/wall/steady object.)
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Roll your right foot/leg to the inside and hold 3-5 seconds.
- Roll your leg to the outside for 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat other side.
- Repeat 1 time.
- Another way to tweak this stretch is by reaching with both of your arms to the inside and outside of your leg, while continuing to slowly rotate your leg.



Sitting Piriformis Stretch

- Sit up tall and cross your right leg over your left knee.
- Turn your body to the right and gently pull your right knee up towards your left shoulder. (photo 13)
- Hold for 10 seconds.
- Repeat 2 times.
- Repeat other side.
- A key stretch to prevent lower back pain, sciatic pain, and hip and knee pain.



Seated Twist (Rotation) Stretch

- Sitting up tall, reach your right hand and put this on the outside of your left knee. Gently twist toward your left side. (14a)
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat other side.
- Repeat 2 times.
- Twist toward your left side while reaching with your right hand over your left shoulder. (photo 14b)
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- This is an excellent stretch to improve hip, shoulder and trunk flexibility while reducing stiffness.



Seated Sidebending Stretch

- Sit up tall and raise your right hand overhead as you lean toward the left side. (photo 15)
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat other side.
- Repeat 2 times.
- If this stretch bothers your shoulders you can keep your hands on your thighs.



Standing Calf Stretch (on stairs)

- Stand up tall on the stairs while hanging onto 1 or 2 rails. Point your toes straight ahead.
- Slowly back up to allow your heels to fall towards the floor, feeling a good stretch in your calf and hamstring muscles. (photo 16)
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Shift your weight toward the right side and hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Shift your weight toward the left side and hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat each side 3-5 times.
- You can tweak this stretch further by slight toe in or out posture with your feet and repeat.
- This is a great stretch for your calf and will help reduce daily wear and tear to your entire working, aging body.



These are the St. Luke's Health System Industrial Athlete WorkSmart Functional Flexibility Stretches that will keep your working body healthy and reduce the daily wear and tear to your working, aging body. Remember to do any one of these stretches more frequently during the workday or at home to reduce fatigue, or discomfort to your body. Taking Bio Ergonomic "Pit Stops" throughout your workday to reverse the postures you do frequently or to reverse and break up the sustained postures we do daily will keep your body healthy and feeling better for LIFE. You and your family are worth the effort!

Disclaimer: This program is intended to provide general instruction on the IMPACC Industrial Athlete WorkSmart Functional Flexibility Stretching Plan to avoid workplace muscle fatigue and discomfort to your working, aging body. These types of exercises may not be appropriate for all individuals. Before beginning this or any other type of exercise program, consult with your physician and/or physical therapist to determine what exercise program is suitable for you. If at any time while performing these exercises you experience any pain, numbness, and/or tingling, discontinue performing these exercises and contact your physician immediately.

More on workstation ergonomics at:

- www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/computerergo.pdf
- http://www.tricare.mil/cap/Ergo_Guide/CAP_Ergo_Guide.pdf
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