



Benefits of Stretching

There are many benefits to regular stretching. Stretching helps increase flexibility, improve your posture, reduce stress and body aches, and prevent musculoskeletal injuries. Read on to learn more about the benefits stretching, plus how to start a stretching routine.

These stretches are usually done before work to get your muscles ready for movement.

- **Increases your flexibility.** Regular stretching can help increase your flexibility, which is crucial for your overall health. Flexibility can help you perform everyday activities with relative ease, and also help delay the reduced mobility that can come with aging.
- **Increases your range of motion.** Being able to move a joint through its full range of motion gives you more freedom of movement. Stretching regularly can help increase your range of motion. One study found that both static and dynamic stretching help to increase range of motion.
- **Improves your performance in physical activities/work.** Performing dynamic stretches prior to physical activities has been shown to help prepare your muscles for work. It may also help improve your performance in athletics.
- **Increases blood flow to your muscles.** Performing stretches on a regular basis may improve your circulation. Improved circulation increases blood flow to your muscles, which can shorten your recovery time and reduce muscle soreness.
- **Improves your posture.** Muscle imbalances are common and can lead to poor posture. One source found that a combination of strengthening and stretching specific muscle groups can reduce musculoskeletal pain and encourage proper alignment, which may help improve your posture.
- **Helps to heal and prevent back pain.** Tight muscles can lead to a decrease in your range of motion,

increasing the likelihood of straining the muscles in your back. Stretching can help heal an existing back injury by stretching the muscles. A regular stretching routine can also help prevent future back pain by strengthening your back muscles and reducing your risk for muscle strain.

- **Is great for stress relief.** When you're experiencing stress, there's a good chance your muscles are tense. That's because your muscles tend to tighten up in response to physical and emotional stress. Focus on areas of your body where you tend to hold your stress, such as your neck, shoulders, and upper back.
- **Can calm your mind.** Participating in a regular stretching program can calm your mind. While you stretch, focus on mindfulness and meditation. Try to take a mental break.
- **Helps decrease tension headaches.** Tension and stress headaches can interfere with your daily life. In addition to a proper diet, adequate hydration, and plenty of rest, stretching may help reduce the tension you feel from headaches from a small jolt to a life-threatening shock.

STRETCHING TECHNIQUES

There are several types of stretching techniques, but the most common forms of stretches are static and dynamic:

- **Static stretches** involve holding a stretch in a comfortable position for a period of time, typically between 10 and 30 seconds.
- **Dynamic stretches** are active movements that cause your muscles to stretch, but the stretch is not held in the end position.

Source: "Stretching: 9 Benefits, Plus Safety Tips and How to Start." Healthline, 18 June 2018, www.healthline.com/health/benefits-of-stretching.

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