



Worksite: _____ Instructor: _____ Date/Time: _____

Topic C061: Stretching

Introduction: Workers in all occupations generally begin each day early. It is not uncommon to be at work before 7AM. Likewise, it is not uncommon to drive for long periods to the job and climb out of the car even stiffer than when you got into it. You go to bed with sore backs, stiff knees, and aching shoulders all from a hard day's work.

All of these are reasons why it is of the utmost importance to stretch your muscles prior to beginning another hard day's work!

Pre-work Stretching Suggestions: A person should stretch only after warming up, when the muscles are warm and less likely to tear. The most effective method of warming up is slowly going through the actual motions of the exercise or work to be performed at a relaxed pace for 3 to 10 minutes. A person should then stretch after warming up or exercising and each stretch should be comfortable enough to hold for a count of ten. Stretching lengthens muscles and tendons, and allows longer muscles to generate more force around the joints, contract more efficiently, and perform better. Stretching should be performed for at least five to ten minutes prior to work.

Shoulders get tired and achy and can be a nagging injury that will plague you for the rest of your life. It is recommended to at least stretch your shoulders for 1-2 minutes.

Back: Back injuries are some of the most common injuries in the workplace today. The back is composed of the largest and strongest muscle group in the body. This is why traditionally people will "over-work" their back. It is recommended to take 1-2 minutes to stretch your back.

- **Bend slowly**, side to side (20-30 seconds).
- **Place your hands** on your lower back, bend your neck back and arch your back (20-30 seconds).
- **Place your legs** together and slowly bend down and try to touch your toes (hold for 20 seconds).
- **Slowly twist** your torso and upper body side to side (20-30 seconds).

Legs/Knees: Legs and knees are under a great deal of stress from carrying heavy loads, squatting, repetitive kneeling, etc. It is recommended to stretch your legs and knees for at least 1-2 minutes.

- **Stand on one leg**, reach behind your back and pull your foot up and forward (20-30 seconds each leg).
- **Spread your legs** and bend down and try to touch the ground (20-30 seconds).

Shoulders: Shoulders get tired and achy and can be a nagging injury that will plague you for the rest of your life. It is recommended to at least stretch your shoulders for 1-2 minutes.

- **Extend your arms** and make large, slow circular motions with your arm. First forward, then backwards (20-30 seconds each arm).
- **Grab the opposite elbow** and pull it across your body to stretch your shoulder muscles (20-30 seconds each arm).

Neck: The neck muscles get extremely fatigued and sore, especially when working in cramped spaces or working in a position that requires you to look at an upward angle. (It is recommended to stretch your neck for at least 1-2 minutes.)

- **Make a slow** circular motion by rotating your head first clockwise, then counter clockwise (20-30 seconds each direction).
- **Place your hand** on one side of your head and use your neck muscles to push against your hand, then switch and push from the other direction (20-30 seconds each direction).

Conclusion: A regular program of exercise will help to strengthen muscles which will help prevent muscle strains and soreness. Alternating exercises or work tasks on a daily basis will allow muscles to recover, prevent injuries, and promote a higher level of fitness. Always consult your doctor before beginning a program of exercise.

Employee Attendance: (Names or signatures of personnel who are attending this meeting)

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These guidelines do not supersede local, state, or federal regulations and must not be construed as a substitute for, or legal interpretation of, any OSHA regulations.