



Stretch and Flex to Prevent Injuries

A lack of flexibility and subsequent awkward movement contribute to sprains and strains, rotator cuff, and back injuries. A “stretch and flex” program in the workplace can help reduce them, and the Risk Pool has prepared a [comprehensive video](#) with instructions on how to do so properly. The following are reasons to stretch and flex, basic program components, and safety items.



Reasons to Stretch and Flex

- Unrestricted Daily Activity - Stretching improves flexibility, which allows us to move without restriction.
- Enhanced Performance - Flexibility improves performance for physical activities. Whether at work or during leisure time, you win.
- Reduced Effects of Aging - Flexibility typically decreases with age, resulting in significant changes in the neck, shoulder, and trunk region. Regular stretching minimizes these changes.
- Offsets Sedentary Lifestyle - Limited motion of a specific joint/muscle can lead to loss of flexibility. Stretching reduces the negative effects of sitting at a computer or driving all day.



Stretch and Flex Program Components

- Frequency - Stretch daily, especially prior to labor intensive tasks.
- Intensity - Stretch without discomfort, and within a joint's normal range of motion.
- Time - Stretching sessions should last about 10 minutes, which should allow enough time to target the major muscle groups.
- Dynamic Stretching - This type of stretching involves moving parts of your body in a controlled manner through a full range of motion, while gradually increasing the reach and speed of the movement. Repeat movements 5 to 12 times in 30 to 60 seconds.



Stretch and Flex Safety

- Warm-up - After a thorough five-minute warm-up, use dynamic stretches to improve the efficiency of the movements you will perform during your work activities.
- Range of Motion - Dynamic stretches should begin with small ranges of motion and progress to larger ranges of motion. The goal is to gradually increase the motion over 30 to 60 seconds, or five to 12 repetitions.
- Use Controlled Movement - Do not bounce or jerk. Instead, use controlled movement. For example, start with small arm circles and progress to increasingly larger ones.
- Avoid Unsafe Stretches - Some stretches that have been considered safe in the past have been found to cause unnecessary strain on joints and muscles. Stretches to avoid include the standing toe touch, hurdler stretch, over-rounding/hyperextension of the back, and full neck circle.

Additional Resources

[TxDOT Stretch and Flex Program](#)