

# STRETCH:

## For the Prevention & Management of Injuries



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Hope  
(Chinese Symbol)

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## SELF- CARE PROGRAM FOR EARLY SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT

The following tips may assist you in managing your pain and discomfort as it occurs at work and home. The tips are geared toward splint usage, ice technique and over the counter medication use. We encourage you to review these guidelines with your doctor or primary care provider. If you are doing self-care, select the tips that will best help you and evaluate each for its benefit to you after trying the suggestion. If your pain worsens, seek medical advice.

### Ice Technique:

Use ice to reduce inflammation, pain and spasms to the involved area. The following tips will help you to achieve maximum benefits with ice.

### Types of Ice Packs:

1. Purchase a (blue) gel pack at the local drug store that is usually used for first aide. It should freeze soft and pliable. Keep this in your freezer ready for use.
2. Fill a Ziploc bag with water. It will freeze as a slush and be malleable to your body part.
3. A bag of frozen vegetables can work well as an ice pack.
4. Freeze water in a cup and put a popsicle *stick in it for direct ice technique.*

### Application:

Ice packs should be applied to the involved area for at least 15-30 minutes/session. If you are sensitive to putting the pack directly to your skin, cover the pack with a thin towel to protect the skin. If the area is thin, you may want to cool it down slowly to improve the tolerance. Apply the ice in 15-second increments, on/off until the skin surface cools enough to leave the ice on. You can apply the ice on/off throughout the day in 15-30 minute increments. Ice packs are excellent for use on swollen, tight, spasmed muscles, trigger points or areas that are burning or very sore and achy.

To perform direct ice technique, use the freezer cup of ice and massage the ice over the involved area in circular or lateral strokes quickly for 5- 7 minutes. Direct ice is excellent for acute and chronic tendonitis and directly applied to isolated trigger points to the neck and back areas.

### Your Expectations:

Although ice can be uncomfortable to apply because it is cold, **it is one of the most effective methods to relieve acute and chronic pain (and swelling).** It does not matter if the injury occurred today or 5 years ago, you can use it at any time. You will feel discomfort and possibly some pain the first 2-5 minutes of icing until the area is numb. After that, you should not feel discomfort. Check your skin after 5 minutes to be sure that it is bright pink. It should not turn white or be mottled. If it is, you have likely over cooled the skin. Some people are allergic to ice technique and develop a rash as a result of the ice. If this develops, discontinue use immediately.

You may want to heat the area. Heating may actually irritate the area and make it worse as it is already inflamed. A hot bath or soak is acceptable, followed by icing the area. You may also do contrast baths of hot water and ice water for 15-30 seconds each for about 10 minutes.

### Self-Care Routine:

If you have acute or chronic pain, it is critical that you be an active participant in your rehabilitation. There is no time to delay in applying these tips to manage your pain. If you wait, your pain will likely worsen. The sooner you intervene in your own care, the sooner you will be pain minimal or in a state of adequate pain control. It is the person that practices good self-care and self-responsibility that minimizes their symptoms and resumes an active and healthy lifestyle with or without discomfort.

Your physician may have prescribed a variety of pain management strategies for you already. For additional self -care, begin with icing the area and an active stretching program combined with task interruption/rotation at work. Also, if you can obtain an ergonomic analysis of your work area, this may have significant benefit as well. Do not delay any longer. When you see the physician, discuss your self-care routine with them.

## Stretching: What is it?

1. Stretching lengthens muscles and soft tissue.
2. Increases flexibility and circulation throughout the body.
3. Reduces the likelihood of muscle strains and sprains.
4. Helps reduce muscle spasming
5. Keeps your muscles warmed up and ready to work.
6. Helps to keep you more alert and productive throughout the day.

## Self-stretching before work is recommended to warm up the body making you less prone to injury.

1. Take at least 1-2 minutes to warm-up and then 5-10 minutes to perform your stretching routine before work. Your employer may provide a specific time period for you and your co-workers to stretch.
2. Take advantage of your lunch and break time to re-stretch.
3. Stretching can be performed at home after work to further reduce stress and fatigue.

## Proper Stretching Technique:

1. As you begin your stretching program; be aware not to over exert yourself. Work slowly and control your stretch.
2. Perform each stretch 3-5 times each holding the desired position 5-15 seconds.
3. Remember not to bounce while holding the position.
4. Proper form is critical. Make sure you are following the instructions in the program.
5. Stretching should not be painful. A painful stretch makes the muscle work against you.
6. While doing your stretches, you might feel a pulling or tight sensation. Hold that position and slowly stretch further.
7. Remember to breathe deeply and relax while stretching. Try not to rush through your stretches.

**CAUTION:** If you develop pain or discomfort beyond the level experienced with stretching or have a current or previous injury, please consult the doctor prior to stretching. Discontinue if the pain continues and your symptoms worsen with movement. Emergency Room precautions advised.

## Cardiovascular

March; raise one arm with the opposite leg.  
(1 minute).



Squat down with arms to the front and the back straight, Straighten up and pull shoulders and elbows back.  
10 times.



## Spine & Trunk

Keep both arms to your side,  
Bend side-to-side.  
Repeat 3-5 times each side.



## Lower Back

Put both hands in the small of your back,  
Bend backwards as far as comfortable,  
Hold briefly and return to upright.  
Repeat 3-5 times.



## Full Spine & Body

Keeping fingers laced,  
Stretch palms overhead as high as possible,  
Reach upwards.  
Repeat 3-5 times.



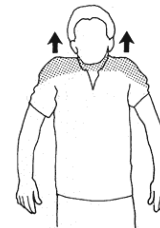
## Neck & Shoulders

Slowly stretch the neck sideways using the arm over the head,  
Keep shoulders low  
Hold for five seconds.  
Repeat 3-5 times each side.



## Neck & Mid-back

Shrug both shoulders up,  
Hold five seconds.  
Push both shoulders down,  
Hold five seconds.  
Roll shoulders in a full circle.  
Repeat 10 times.



## Rotator Cuff

Pull the elbow across the body using other hand,  
Hold for 5 seconds.  
Repeat 3-5 times each side.



## Mid-back

With fingers laced, stretch palms to front,  
Hold five seconds.  
Repeat 3-5 times.



## Chest & Mid-back

Both hands together behind the back,  
Stretch backwards,  
Hold for five seconds.  
Repeat 3-5 times.



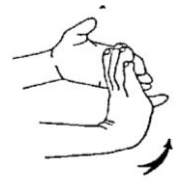
## Forearm Flexors

Palms of hands together,  
Elbows out to sides,  
Press hands down,  
Hold for five seconds.  
Repeat 3-5 times.



## Forearm Flexors

Straighten arm out in front,  
Pull fingers and hand back,  
Hold five seconds.  
Repeat 3-5 times each side.



## Forearm Extensors

Keep arm out in front,  
Bend hand down till you feel the stretch in your forearm,  
Hold five seconds.  
Repeat 3-5 times each side.

