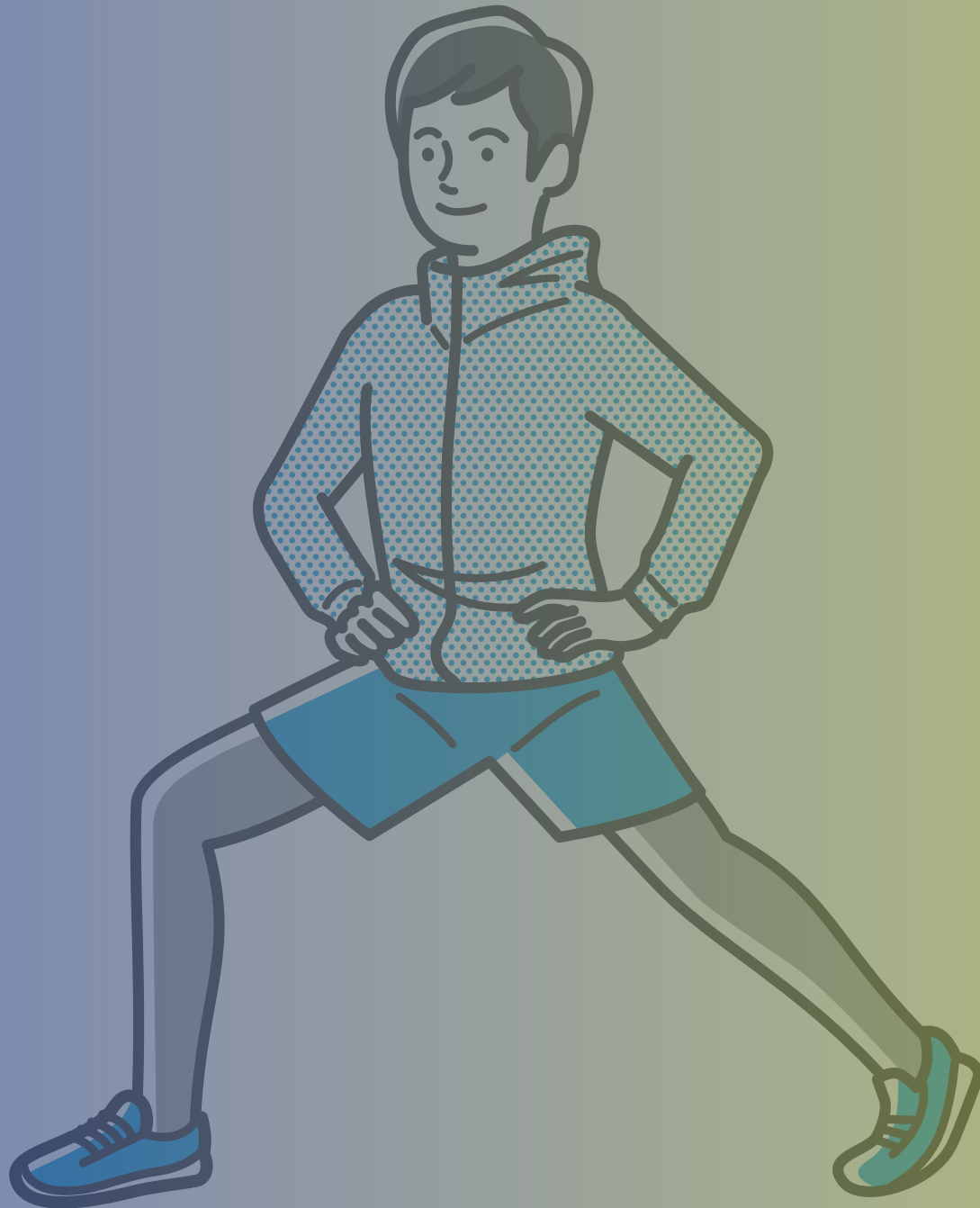


Warm-up and stretching exercises



Warm-Up and Stretch

Types of stretches:

Dynamic Stretches (General Warm-up Activities): A gentle **warm-up activity** before stretching will help promote blood flow and increase the temperature of your body's tissues. This increases your muscles' ability to do work and makes them less susceptible to injury.

Tension-Breaker Stretches: **Tension-breaker stretches** follow your dynamic stretches or general muscle warm-up activities. They are used to reduce feelings of muscle tightness or to prepare your muscles for activity. Over the course of a working day, we may experience muscle tension for various reasons. If left unchecked, this tightness can intensify and cause persistent pain and discomfort. Tension-breaker stretches can be performed at any time during the day to alleviate discomfort.

Warm-up Benefits

- ❖ Develops awareness of the body.
- ❖ Improves coordination.
- ❖ Increases range of motion.
- ❖ Prepare mentally and physically.
- ❖ Feels good!

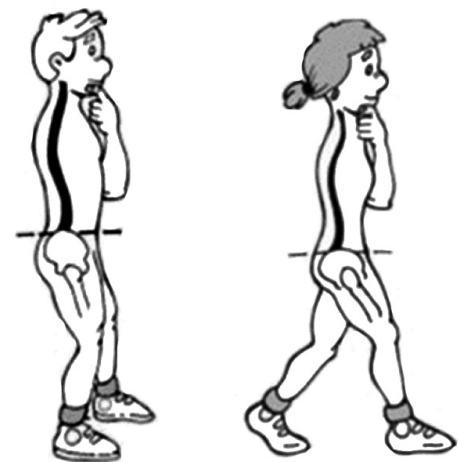
Do's and Don'ts

- ❖ Do not bounce!
- ❖ Do not hold your breath!
- ❖ Avoid stretching cold muscles.
- ❖ Avoid over stretching.
- ❖ Count the seconds for each stretch.
- ❖ Listen to your body!

Neutral Standing Posture

The neutral standing posture is the starting position for all the exercises in this program.

- Stand wide (either in a front-to-back or side-to-side stance).
- Toes slightly outward in a side-to-side stance.
- Knees slightly flexed.
- Head in neutral position (head up, place index finger on chin, and gently push chin in).
- Shoulders back, chest up, back neutral (natural s-curve of the spine).



Side to side stance

Front to back stance

Dynamic Stretches (General Warm-up Activities)

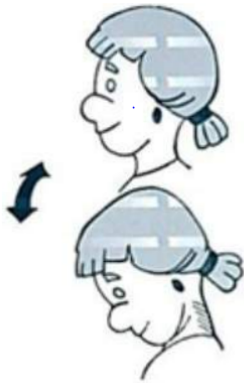
Exercise 1: Head Drop (Neck)



* Repeat 5-10 times.

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance.
- Gently press chin inward with index finger.
- Gently tilt head to one side, keeping ear aligned with shoulder.
- Return head to neutral position.
- Repeat, other side.

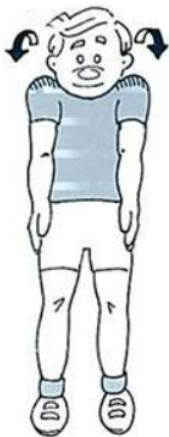
Exercise 2: Chin Drop



* Repeat 5-10 times.

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance.
- Gently press chin inward with index finger.
- Gently drop chin to chest.
- Return head to neutral position.

Exercise 3: Shoulder Shrug/Circle



* Repeat 5-10 times.

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance.
- Draw both shoulders up toward ears, pause and release.
- Circle both shoulders slowly, forward or backward.

Dynamic Stretches (General Warm-up Activities)

Exercise 4: Arm Raise (front of shoulders)



* Repeat 5-10 times.

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance.
- Arms extended at sides, wrists slightly extended and elbows slightly flexed.
- Raise arms to shoulder level, return to start.

Exercise 5: Arm Pullback



* Repeat 5-10 times.

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance.
- Arms extended at sides, wrists slightly extended and elbows slightly flexed.
- Behind back, raise and lower arms to a comfortable level.

Exercise 6: Wide Arm Circles

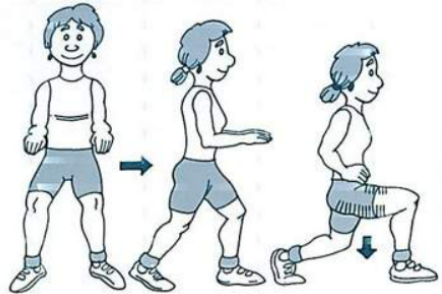


* Repeat 5-10 times.

- Neutral standing posture, front to-back stance.
- Move arm (on same side as the foot that is out front) in forward or backward circle.
- Repeat, other arm.
- **Variation:** For limited shoulder range of motion, place hand on shoulder and circle elbow, or let arm hang down in front of body and circle like a pendulum.

Dynamic Stretches (General Warm-up Activities)

Exercise 7: Gentle Pivot



* Repeat 5-10 times.

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance.
- Elbows flexed at 90 degrees.
- Turn toe of one foot to side, rotate pelvis in a slow and controlled manner to same side by using the toe of opposite foot as pivot point.
- Entire body should turn as one unit (don't twist at the waist).
- At end of pivot, flex at hips, knees, ankles, and lower body.
- Return to neutral standing posture.
- Repeat, other side.

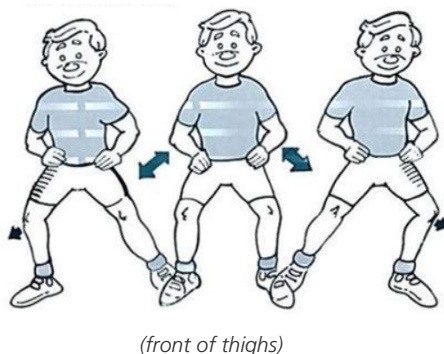
Exercise 8: Basic Squat



* Repeat 5-10 times.

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance.
- Hands on hips.
- Lower to Ready Position and continuously flex and extend at hips, knees and ankles in up and down direction.
- **Tip:** Refer to Ready Position for detailed positioning tips and safety precautions.

Exercise 9: Side Shift

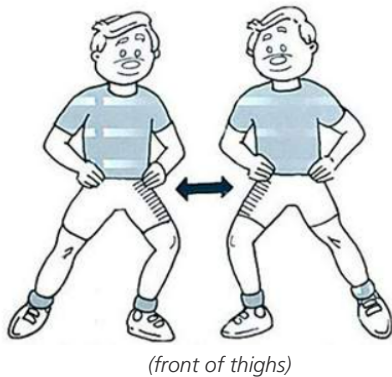


* Repeat 5-10 times.

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance.
- Hands on hips.
- Lower to Ready Position.
- Lower body to one side by shifting body weight over thigh (flex knee of shifting leg while extending opposite leg).
- Return to neutral standing posture.
- Repeat, over other thigh.
- **Tip:** Ensure knee does not go past toe at end of move and it flexes in line with direction in which the toes are pointing.

Dynamic Stretches (General Warm-up Activities)

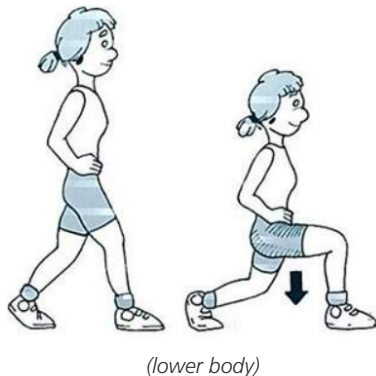
Exercise 10: Combination Side Shift



* Repeat 5-10 times.

- Once comfortable with the “Side Shift”, combine both sides into one movement by eliminating the up and down motion, and incorporating a horizontal, side-to-side movement over each thigh.

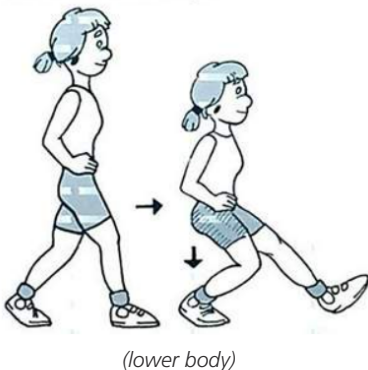
Exercise 11: Front Shift



* Repeat 5-10 times.

- Neutral standing posture, front-to back stance.
- Hands on hips.
- Flex both knees and lower body toward the ground.
- Return to neutral standing posture.
- Repeat, over other thigh.
- **Tip:** Let your fitness level determine how low you go!

Exercise 12: Back Shift

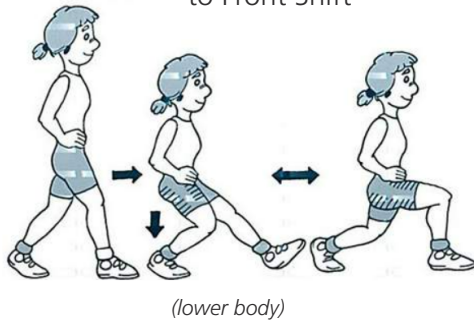


* Repeat 5-10 times.

- Neutral standing posture, front-to-back stance.
- Hands on hips.
- Flex the back knee, and lower buttocks as though sitting in a chair.
- Return to neutral standing posture.
- Repeat, over other thigh.

Dynamic Stretches (General Warm-up Activities)

Exercise 13: Combination Back to Front Shift

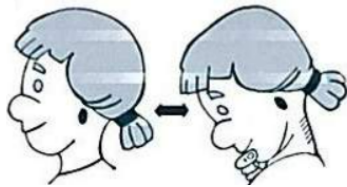


* Repeat 5-10 times.

- Once comfortable with the “Front Shift” and “Back Shift”, combine them into one movement by eliminating the up and down motion and incorporating a horizontal, back-to-front movement.

Tension-Breaker Stretches

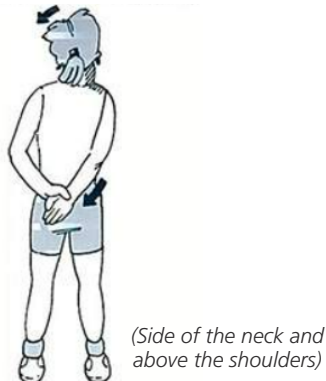
Exercise 1: Neck Forward



* Hold 8-10 seconds each side.

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance.
- Gently press chin inward with index finger.
- Don't force head down.
- **Tip:** If you don't feel a stretch, place hand on back of head forward.

Exercise 2: Ear to Shoulder

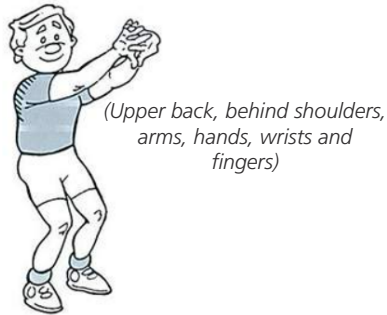


* Hold 8-10 seconds each side.

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance.
- Gently press chin inward with index finger.
- Tilt head to left, keeping ear aligned with shoulder.
- Repeat, other side
- **Tip:** If you don't feel a stretch on the right side of your neck, grasp right hand behind your back with your left hand, pulldown gently at an angle across the back.
- **Variation:** For limited shoulder range of motion, place your arm straight to your side with your palm facing the floor. Push down towards the floor while tilting your head towards your opposite shoulder.

Tension-Breaker Stretches

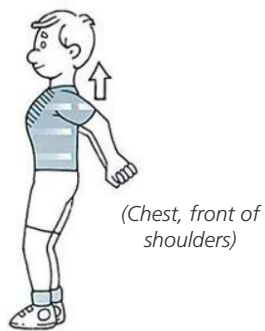
Exercise 3: Upper Torso Stretch



* Hold 8-10 seconds each side.

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance, chin in.
- Raise arms to shoulder level and interlace fingers, palms out.
- Curl shoulders forward, push out on upper back and stretch through arms and fingers.
- **Tip:** Feel free to pelvic tilt to feel the stretch in the lower back.
- **Variation:** If clasping hands is uncomfortable, place hands on lower back, fingers down.

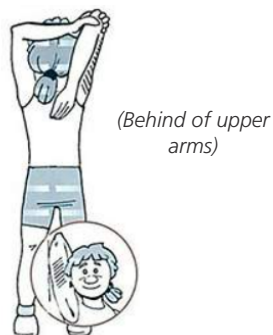
Exercise 4: Chest Stretch



* Hold 8-10 seconds each side.

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance, chin in.
- Clasp hands behind back, elbows flexed.
- Guide elbows upward while pushing out and up with chest.
- **Tip:** If your back arches excessively, pelvic tilt to neutral.
- **Variation:** If clasping hands is uncomfortable, place hands on lower back, fingers down.

Exercise 5: Tricep Stretch



* Hold 8-10 seconds each side.

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance, chin in.
- Raise one arm overhead, elbow flexed.
- Grasp arm behind elbow, gently press down at an angle toward opposite side of back.
- Repeat, other arm.
- **Tips:** Keep head up and chin in. It may be more comfortable to grasp the hand and pull rather than push on the elbow. If back arches excessively, pelvic tilt to neutral.
- **Variation:** A hand or wall in front of the upper arm can be used to push elbow backward.

Tension-Breaker Stretches

Exercise 6: Shoulder Stretch

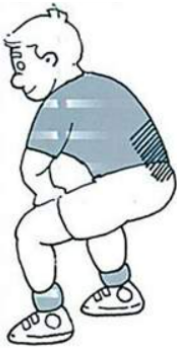


(Behind shoulders)

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance, chin in.
- Extend one arm in front of body.
- Place opposite hand just above the elbow, gently apply pressure to move arm toward opposite shoulder.
- Repeat, other arm.
- **Tip:** Ensure there is no upward movement in the arm being stretched and that the hand is positioned behind the elbow.

* Hold 8-10 seconds each side.

Exercise 7: Cat Stretch



(Lower back)

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance.
- Lower to Ready Position.
- Slide hands down thighs almost to knees (fingers pointed in, elbows slightly flexed).
- Keep back neutral to maintain natural s-curve of spine.
- Pelvic tilt to stretch lower back.
- Push out on upper back, curl shoulders forward, like a stretching cat.
- **Tip:** Feels great after long periods of standing!
- **Variation:** You might perform this stretch more easily holding a chair back or table.

* Hold 8-10 seconds each side.

Exercise 8: Shoulder Dip



(back)

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance.
- Lower to Ready Position.
- Perform the Cat Stretch at left.
- While looking straight ahead, gently dip one shoulder in toward the opposite leg while pushing out on upper back.
- Repeat, other side.
- **Tip:** Don't twist your torso; keep shoulder movement minimal. A nice stretch after standing for long periods!

* Hold 8-10 seconds each side.

Tension-Breaker Stretches

Exercise 9: Abdominal Stretch



(whole body, especially the abdomen)

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance.
- Extend arms overhead, clasp hands, elbows in line with ears.
- Stretch arms upward as though grasping for something that is slightly out of reach.
- Allow slight arch in lower back.
- **Tip:** A nice stretch after sitting for long periods!
- **Variation:** Standing on tiptoes will maximize the stretch.

* Hold 8-10 seconds each side.

Exercise 10: Side Stretch



(Lateral muscles of the abdomen)

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance.
- Raise one arm overhead, elbow in line with ear, opposite hand on hip.
- Reach up and over toward opposite side of the body; reach for something just over the opposite shoulder.
- Repeat, other side.
- **Tip:** Don't bend sideways at the waist; instead, reach up and over your head while pushing out on the side of your abdomen.

* Hold 8-10 seconds each side.

Exercise 11: Hip Flexor Stretch



(Front of upper thighs)

- Neutral standing posture, front-to back stance.
- Place hand on buttock of back leg.
- Gently do a Front Shift and allow heel of back leg to come off the floor. If back is arching, move front foot farther forward to ensure that when in the end position of the move, the knee rests directly over the toe and the upper body is neutral.
- Rise to neutral standing posture.
- Repeat, other side.
- **Tip:** To maximize stretch, pelvic tilt.
- **Variation:** If stretch is not felt or movement is uncomfortable, place front foot on a chair or bench and perform the above movement.

* Hold 8-10 seconds each side.

Tension-Breaker Stretches

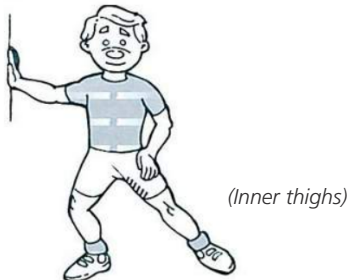
Exercise 12: Hamstring Stretch



* Hold 8-10 seconds each side.

- Posture Neutral standing posture, front-to-back stance.
- Place hands on thigh of front leg.
- Perform Back Shift while pulling toe of front foot upward.
- Flex through the hip of the back leg while gently pushing through the heel of front foot.
- Don't bend at waist, flex through hip.
- Rise to neutral standing posture.
- Repeat, other side.
- **Tips:** Use a wall for support and balance, if needed. Remember, keep knee of front leg slightly flexed.
- **Variation:** If stretch is still not felt or movement is uncomfortable, perform with front foot on a chair, heel down, toe up.

Exercise 13: Standing Groin Stretch

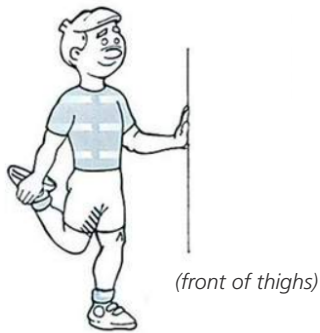


* Hold 8-10 seconds each side.

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance.
- Lower to Ready Position.
- Hand on hip.
- Perform Side Shift (ensure knee of extended leg remains slightly flexed).
- Repeat, other side.
- **Tips:** A wall can be used for support. To maximize stretch, pelvic tilt.
- **Variation:** If stretch can't be felt, widen stance.

Tension-Breaker Stretches

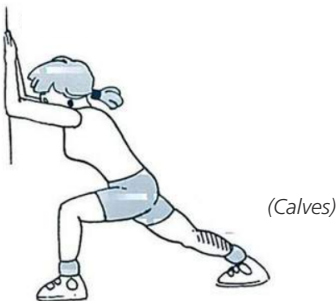
Exercise 14: Standing Quadricep Stretch



* Hold 8-10 seconds each side.

- Neutral standing posture, side-to-side stance, one hand on firm support.
- Flex knees and lower body to grasp top of one foot.
- Pull foot up toward buttocks, keeping thigh of the flexed leg parallel with the supporting leg.
- Ensure knee points toward the ground.
- Repeat, other side.
- **Tip:** To maximize the stretch, pelvic tilt. If you can't grasp the top of your foot, try for a pant leg or the back of your shoe!
- **Variation:** To help with balance, you can also place the flexed knee on the seat of a chair, ensuring that the flexed knee doesn't bear your weight.

Exercise 15: Calf Stretch



* Hold 8-10 seconds each side.

- Neutral standing posture, front-to-back facing a wall with front foot touching wall.
- Place hands on wall, gradually perform Front Shift.
- Move elbows to wall, keeping heels flat on floor.
- As you complete the movement, ensure back is not arched.
- Repeat, other side.
- **Tip:** To maximize stretch, pelvic tilt.
- **Variation:** If you can't feel the stretch, widen stance.

