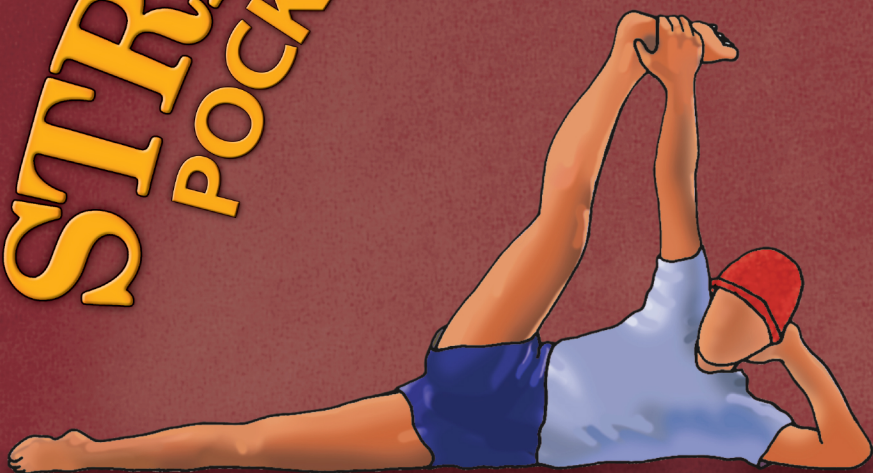


**3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>  
million  
copies  
sold!**

# **STRETCHING** **POCKET BOOK**



**40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition**

**BOB ANDERSON**

Illustrated by **JEAN ANDERSON**

**NEW! Stretches for Smartphone Users**

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# GETTING STARTED

This first section is an introduction to stretching. It is very important to read pages 12–13, “How to Stretch,” so you will understand how to do the stretches in the rest of the book. Then, if you are new to stretching, the section “Getting Started,” on pages 15–21, will take you through a series of simple stretches.

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# INTRODUCTION

Today millions of people have discovered the benefits of movement. Everywhere you look they are out: running, cycling, skating, playing tennis, or swimming. What do they hope to accomplish? Why this relatively sudden interest in physical fitness?

Many recent studies have shown that active people lead fuller lives. They have more stamina, resist illness, and stay trim. They have more self-confidence, are less depressed, and often, even late in life, are still working energetically on new projects.

Medical research has shown that a great deal of ill health is directly related to lack of physical activity. We now realize that the only way to prevent the diseases of inactivity is to remain active — not for a month, or a year, but for a lifetime.

\* \* \* \*

Our ancestors did not have the problems that go with a sedentary life; they had to work hard to survive. They stayed strong and healthy through continuous, vigorous outdoor work: chopping, digging, tilling, planting, hunting, etc. But with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, machines began to do the work once done by hand. As people became less active, they began to lose strength and flexibility.

Machines have obviously made life easier, but they have also created serious problems. Instead of walking, we drive; rather than climb stairs, we use elevators. Computers have made us even more sedentary. Without daily physical exertion, our bodies become storehouses of unreleased tensions. With no natural outlets for our tensions, our muscles become weak and tight, and we lose touch with our physical nature.

Health is something we can control. We are no longer content to sit and stagnate. Now we are moving, rediscovering the joys of an active, healthy life. What's more, we can resume a more healthy and rewarding existence at any age.

\* \* \* \*

The body's capacity for recovery is phenomenal. For example, a surgeon makes an incision, removes or corrects the problem, then sews you back up. At this point, the body takes over and heals itself. All of us have this seemingly miraculous capacity for regaining health, whether it's from something as drastic as surgery, or from poor physical condition caused by lack of activity and bad diet.

# HOW TO STRETCH

**S**tretching is easy to learn. But there is a right way and a wrong way to stretch. The right way is a relaxed, sustained stretch with your attention focused on the muscles being stretched. The wrong way (unfortunately practiced by many people) is to bounce up and down or to stretch to the point of pain: these methods can actually do more harm than good.

If you stretch correctly and regularly, you will find that every movement you make becomes easier. It will take time to loosen up tight muscles or muscle groups, but time is quickly forgotten when you start to feel good.

## The Easy Stretch

When you begin a stretch, spend 5–15 seconds in the *easy stretch*. No bouncing! Go to the point where you feel a *mild tension*, and relax as you hold the stretch. The feeling of tension should subside as you hold the position. If it does not, ease off slightly and find a degree of tension that is comfortable. You should be able to say, “I feel the stretch, but it is not painful.” The easy stretch reduces muscular tightness and tension and readies the tissues for the developmental stretch.

## The Developmental Stretch

After the easy stretch, move slowly into the *developmental stretch*. Again, no bouncing. Move a fraction of an inch further until you again feel a mild tension and hold for 5–15 seconds. Be in control. Again, the tension should diminish; if not, ease off slightly. Remember: If the stretch tension increases as the stretch is held and/or it becomes painful, you are stretching too far! The developmental stretch fine-tunes the muscles and increases flexibility.

## Breathing

Your breathing should be slow, rhythmical, and under control. If you are bending forward to do a stretch, exhale as you bend forward and then breathe slowly as you hold the stretch. Do not hold your breath while stretching. If a stretch position inhibits your natural breathing pattern, then you are obviously not relaxed. Just ease up on the stretch so you can breathe naturally.

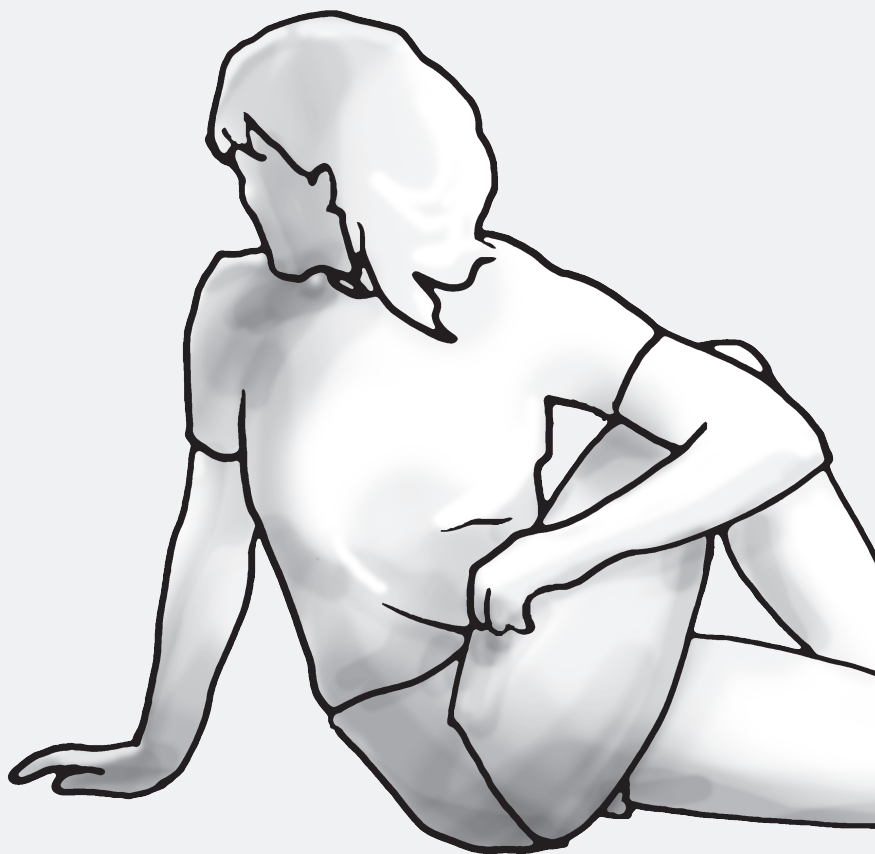
## Counting

At first, silently count the seconds for each stretch; this will insure that you hold the proper tension for a long enough time. After a while, you will be stretching by the way it feels, without the distraction of counting.

# THE STRETCHES

In the following section (*pp. 26–103*) are all the stretches in the book, with instructions for each position. They are grouped according to body parts and presented as a series, but any of them may be done separately without doing the entire routine.

**Note:** You need not stretch as far as the drawings indicate. Stretch by how you feel without trying to imitate the figure in the drawings. Adjust each stretch to your own personal flexibility, which will vary daily.



Learn stretches for the various parts of the body, at first concentrating on the areas of greatest tension or tightness. On the next two pages is a guide to various muscles and body parts, with reference to the page where each may be found in the book.

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<b>Relaxing Stretches for Your Back .....</b>	<b>26</b>
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<b>A Series of Stretches for the Legs .....</b>	<b>49</b>
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<b>Stretches for the Upper Body Using a Towel .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>A Series of Stretches for Hands, Wrists, and Forearms .....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Sitting Stretches .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Advanced Stretches for the Legs and Groin</b>	
<b>with Feet Elevated .....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Stretching the Groin and Hips with Legs Apart .....</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Learning the Splits .....</b>	<b>101</b>



## Stretches for the Legs, Feet, and Ankles

- Rotate ankle clockwise and counterclockwise through a complete range of motion with slight resistance provided by hand.
- This rotary motion helps to gently stretch out tight ankle ligaments.
- Repeat 10–20 times in each direction.
- Do both ankles.



Feel if there is any difference between ankles in terms of tightness and range of motion. Sometimes ankle that has been sprained will feel weaker and tighter. Difference may go unnoticed until you work each ankle separately and make comparison.

- Next, use fingers to gently pull toes toward you to stretch top of foot and tendons of toes.
- Hold easy stretch 10 seconds.
- Repeat 2–3 times.
- Do both feet.
- Holding this position also helps relax bottom of foot (*plantar fascia*).



- Place thumbs at base of large toes (bottom of feet where toes come out of foot, index fingers slightly bent, and placed over nails of large toes.
- Use fingers and thumbs to move large toes back and forth 15–20 seconds.
- Rotate large toes in circular motion both clockwise and counterclockwise 10–15 seconds.
- Concentrate on increasing range of motion of toes as you manipulate area.
- Great way to improve or maintain the flexibility and circulation of area.



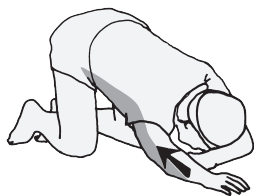
- With thumbs, massage up and down longitudinal arch of foot.
- Use circular motions with good amount of pressure to loosen tissues.
- Do both feet.
- Should help reduce tension and tightness in feet.



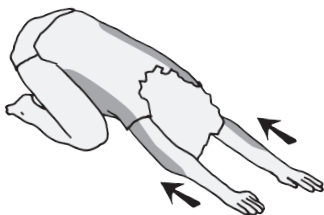
## Stretches for the Back, Shoulders, and Arms

There are many stretches that can reduce tension and increase flexibility in the upper body. Most of the sitting or standing stretches can be done anywhere.

Many people suffer from tension in the upper body because of stress in their lives. Quite a few muscular athletes are stiff in the upper body because of not stretching that area.

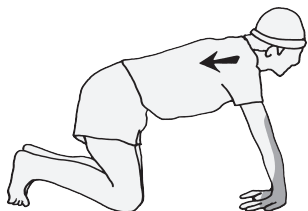


- Kneel with legs bent beneath you, rest forehead on left arm, and reach right arm forward.
- Pull back at hips, pressing palms down.
- Hold 10–20 seconds.
- Repeat on other side.



You can do this stretch one arm at a time or both at same time.

- Pulling with just one arm provides more control and isolates stretch on either side.
- By slightly moving your hips in either direction, you can increase or decrease stretch.
- Don't strain. Be relaxed. Hold 15 seconds.



### A Forearm and Wrist Stretch:

- Kneel on all fours with thumbs pointed out, fingers pointed toward knees.
- Palms flat, gently lean back.
- Hold 5–15 seconds, relax and repeat.

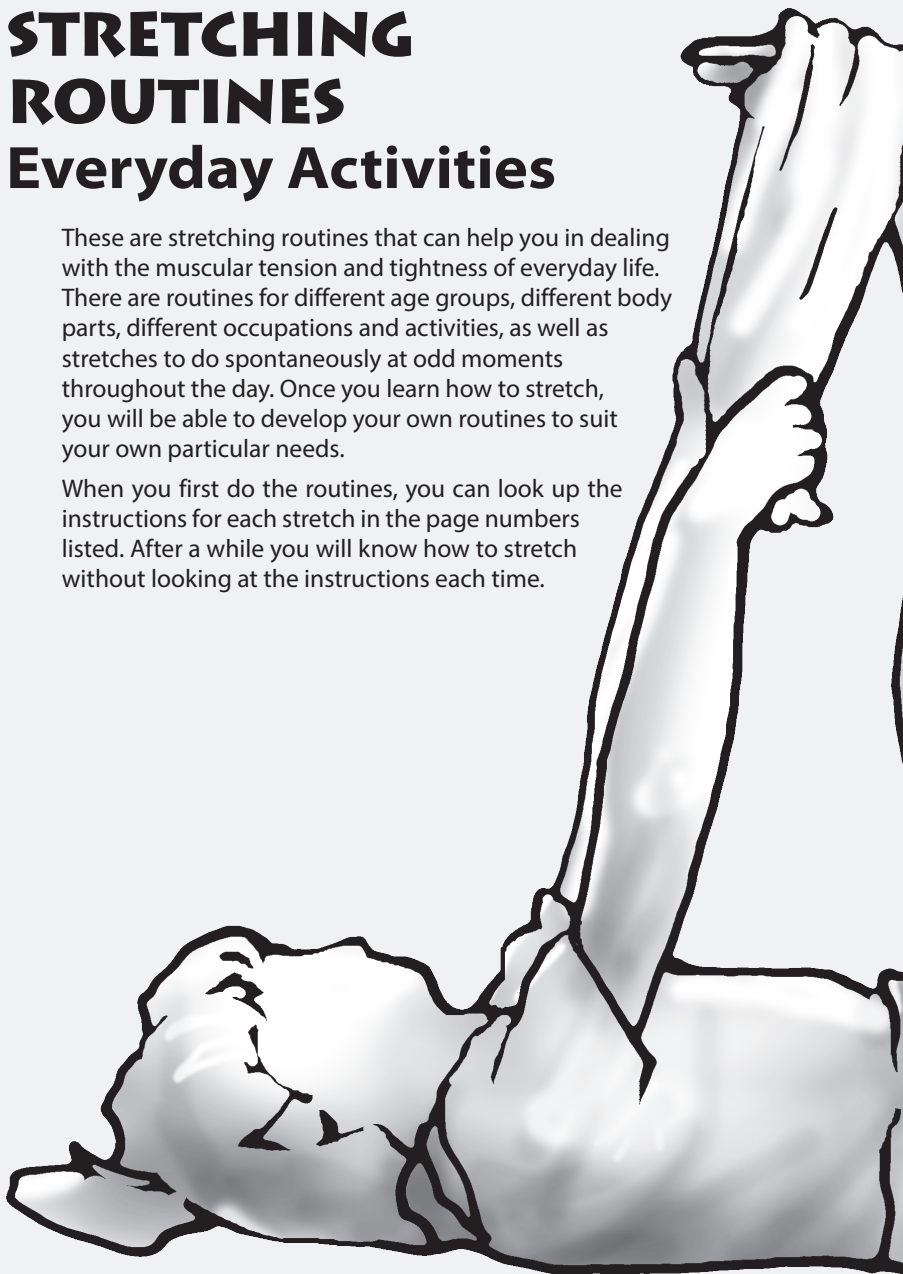


# **STRETCHING ROUTINES**

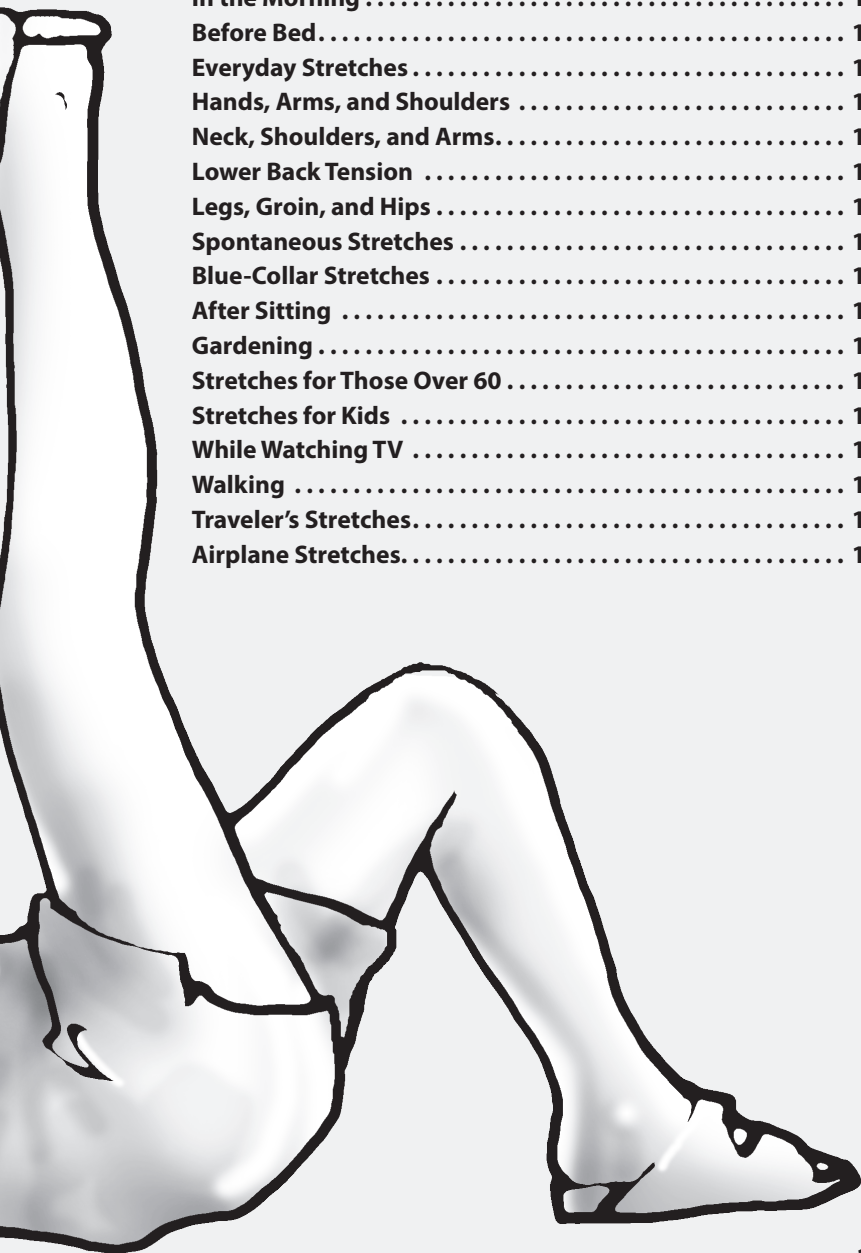
## **Everyday Activities**

These are stretching routines that can help you in dealing with the muscular tension and tightness of everyday life. There are routines for different age groups, different body parts, different occupations and activities, as well as stretches to do spontaneously at odd moments throughout the day. Once you learn how to stretch, you will be able to develop your own routines to suit your own particular needs.

When you first do the routines, you can look up the instructions for each stretch in the page numbers listed. After a while you will know how to stretch without looking at the instructions each time.



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<b>Before Bed.....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Everyday Stretches .....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>Hands, Arms, and Shoulders .....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Neck, Shoulders, and Arms.....</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>Lower Back Tension .....</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Legs, Groin, and Hips .....</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>Spontaneous Stretches .....</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>Blue-Collar Stretches .....</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>After Sitting .....</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>Gardening .....</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>Stretches for Those Over 60 .....</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Stretches for Kids .....</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>While Watching TV .....</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>Walking .....</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>Traveler's Stretches.....</b>	<b>134</b>
<b>Airplane Stretches.....</b>	<b>136</b>

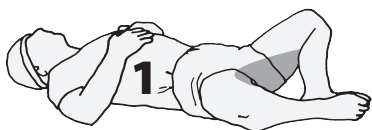


# EVERYDAY STRETCHES

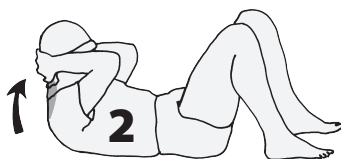
## APPROXIMATELY 5 MINUTES

Start with several minutes of walking. Then use these everyday stretches to fine-tune your muscles. This is a general routine that emphasizes stretching and relaxing the muscles most frequently used during normal day-to-day activities.

In the simple tasks of everyday living, we often use our body in strained or awkward ways, creating stress and tension. A kind of muscular *rigor mortis* sets in. If you can set aside 10 minutes every day for stretching, you will offset this accumulated tension so you can use your body with greater ease.



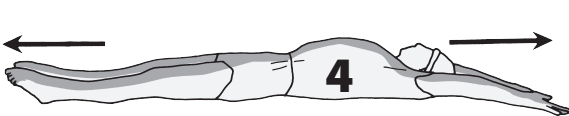
20 seconds  
(page 26)



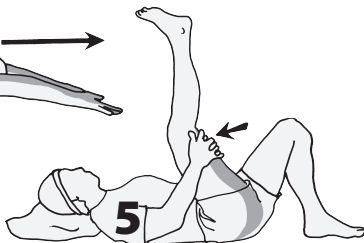
3–5 seconds  
2 times  
(page 27)



10–20 seconds  
each leg  
(page 31)



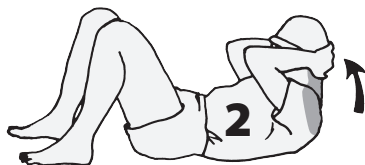
5–10 seconds  
2 times  
(page 30)



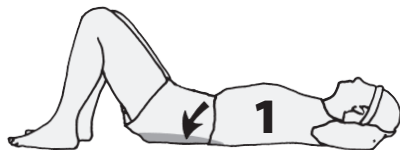
10–20 seconds  
each leg  
(page 58)

**APPROXIMATELY 5 MINUTES**

Many people carry stress in their neck and shoulder area. This stretching routine will help with that problem. Do these stretches throughout the day. Breathe deeply and relax.



3–5 seconds  
2 times  
(page 27)



5–6 seconds  
(page 29)



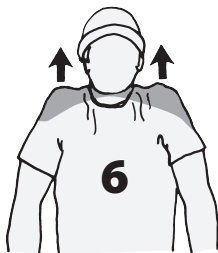
5–6 seconds  
2 times  
(page 28)



8–10  
seconds  
each side  
(page 29)



10 seconds  
2 times  
(page 46)



5 seconds  
2 times  
(page 46)

# STRETCHING IN THE AGE OF COMPUTERS AND SMARTPHONES

## Computers

Ten years ago, we updated this book to address the problems coming from sedentary office work, especially from too much time spent at a computer.

People were staying in the same position for long periods of time while working on computers. Even typewriters that were in usage earlier required some movement: putting in paper, turning the roller knob, working the carriage release lever. Computers eliminated these functions.

## Phones

### *What's new?*

The last ten years have seen a tremendous increase in smartphone usage, and this has caused problems, especially poor posture from looking downward most of the time.

In this section of the book, we'll outline the main problems that come from spending a lot of time on a computer and/or phone each day, and present simple stretches and tips that will improve your posture, make you feel better, and minimize pain.

<b>Desk (Computer) Stretches</b> .....	<b>140</b>
<b>Stretches for Keyboard Operators</b> .....	<b>144</b>
<b>Online Stretches</b> .....	<b>145</b>
<b>Phone Health Problems</b> .....	<b>146</b>
<b>Phone Stretches (Sitting)</b> .....	<b>150</b>
<b>Phone Stretches (Standing)</b> .....	<b>151</b>
<b>The Importance of Exercise</b> .....	<b>152</b>

# DESK (COMPUTER) FITNESS

Sitting for hours at a time is a relatively recent phenomenon in human history. These days, most people working on computers sit for too long without a break, and problems are multiplying.

## Computer Injuries

Fast, light-touch keyboards that allow high-speed typing have resulted in an epidemic of injuries to the hands, arms, and shoulders. Slowly, the thousands of repeated keystrokes and long periods of gripping and dragging a mouse damage the body. This happens even more quickly due to improper keyboarding technique and/or body positions that stress the tendons and nerves in the hand, wrist, arms, shoulders, and neck.

## Typical problems

- **Repetitive strain injuries** — RSIs — (such as carpal tunnel syndrome and tendinitis) are typically caused by repetitive hand movements.
- **Back pain:** Sitting for long periods compresses your spine. If your posture is bad, gravity accentuates the problem.
- **Stiff muscles:** Not moving for long periods can cause neck and shoulder pain.
- **Tight joints:** Inactivity can cause joints to tighten, which makes moving more difficult or even painful.
- **Poor circulation:** When you sit very still, blood settles in the lower legs and feet and does not circulate well. There can be tingling, coldness, or numbness in the hands, and back pain.

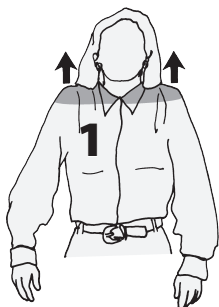
## What If You Have Such Symptoms?

We all have occasional aches and pains that go away in a day or two. But if you have recurring problems from using the computer, run, do not walk, to your doctor or health care provider. An early diagnosis can limit damage. Don't ignore the pain; you may sustain a serious injury. There are no quick fixes. No wrist splint, arm rest, split keyboard, spinal adjustment, etc. is going to get you right back to work at full speed. Even carpal tunnel sufferers who have wrist release surgery can be back in pain if they don't make long-term changes in their techniques and work habits. Healing does happen but it may take months, not days.

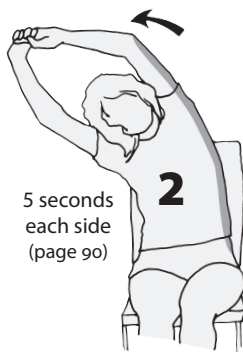
# PHONE STRETCHES (SITTING)

## APPROXIMATELY 1 MINUTE

- Do these whenever you need a break, or feel stiff.
- You needn't do all of these.
- Even one stretch can make a difference.
- Breathe.
- Stretch by the *feel*. If you do this, you'll develop body awareness: getting in touch with different parts of your body.
- Take a walk. Do something to get your blood circulating.
- After you finish the stretches, bring your phone up to eye level. Practice this often, and you'll develop a better habit.



5 seconds 2 times  
(page 46)



5 seconds  
each side  
(page 90)



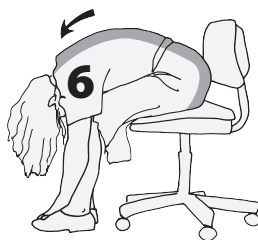
5 seconds each side  
(page 46)



5 seconds 2 times  
(page 28)



10 seconds 2 times  
(page 46)



5 seconds  
(page 92)



10 seconds 2 times  
(page 46)



# **STRETCHING ROUTINES**

## **Sports and Activities**

In this section are stretching routines for sports and activities, arranged in alphabetical order.



Each time you do a stretch for the first time, read the *specific* instructions for that stretch. (See the page reference under each stretch.) After you follow the instructions a few times, you'll know how to do each stretch correctly. From then on, simply look at the drawings.

**Warming up:** For the more vigorous sports (running, football, etc.), I recommend that you do a short warm-up before stretching (jogging for 3–5 minutes with an exaggerated arm swing, for example). See p. 14, *Warming Up and Cooling Down*.

**To teachers and coaches:** These routines can serve as guidelines. You can add or subtract stretches to meet specific needs and time allotments.

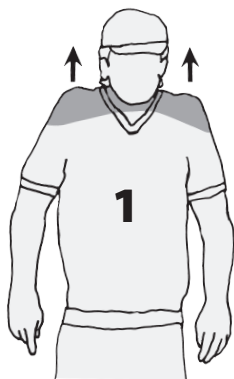
**Note:** Be sure to read *How To Stretch* on pp. 12–13 before you do these routines.

<b>Aerobic Exercise</b> .....	<b>156</b>	<b>Rock Climbing</b> .....	<b>194</b>
<b>Badminton</b> .....	<b>158</b>	<b>Rodeo</b> .....	<b>196</b>
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<b>Gymnastics</b> .....	<b>176</b>	<b>Table Tennis</b> .....	<b>212</b>
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<b>Ice Hockey</b> .....	<b>180</b>	<b>Trekking Poles</b> .....	<b>216</b>
<b>Inline Skating</b> .....	<b>182</b>	<b>Triathlon</b> .....	<b>218</b>
<b>Kayaking</b> .....	<b>184</b>	<b>Volleyball</b> .....	<b>220</b>
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<b>Mountain Biking</b> .....	<b>190</b>	<b>Wrestling</b> .....	<b>226</b>
<b>Racquetball, Handball, Squash</b> .	<b>192</b>		

# BEFORE & AFTER BASEBALL/SOFTBALL

APPROXIMATELY 5 MINUTES

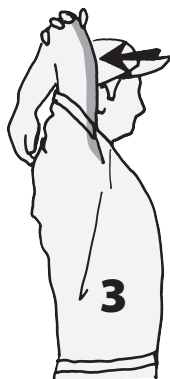
Jog around the baseball field once before stretching.



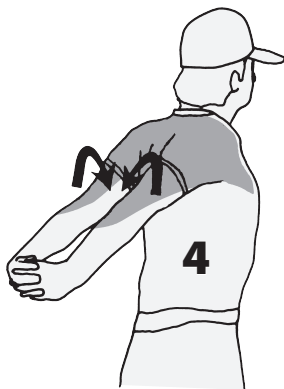
5 seconds  
2–3 times  
(page 46)



8–10 seconds  
each arm  
(page 47)



8–10 seconds  
each arm  
(page 44)



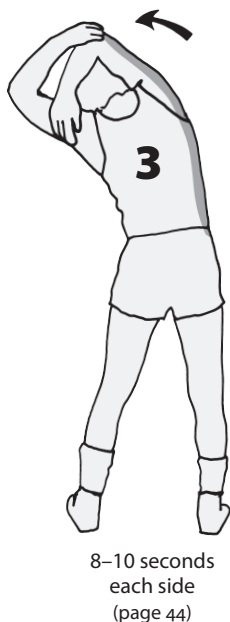
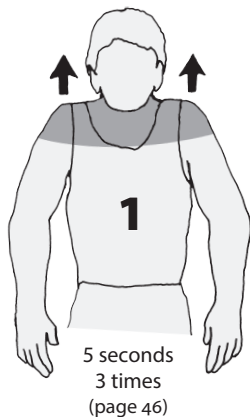
10–15 seconds  
each arm  
2 times  
(page 47)



10–15 seconds  
each leg  
(page 53)

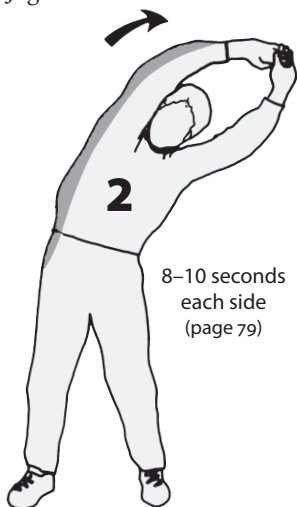
**APPROXIMATELY 4 MINUTES**

Warm up by jogging for 3–5 minutes before stretching.

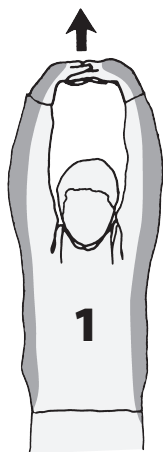


**APPROXIMATELY 4 MINUTES**

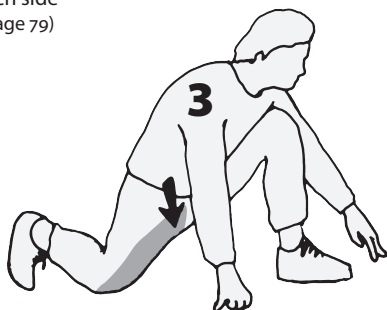
Jog around the football field before stretching.



8–10 seconds  
each side  
(page 79)



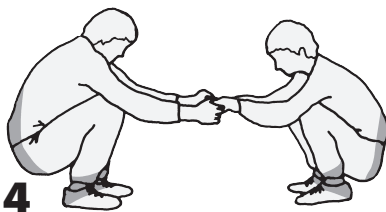
10 seconds  
2 times  
(page 46)



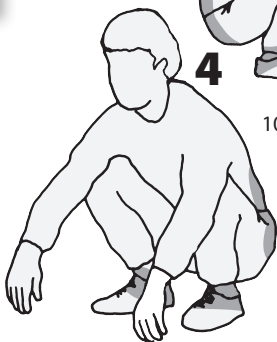
10–15 seconds  
each leg  
(page 51)

**Mini-routine:**

1, 2, 3, 8, 10  
Approx. 2 min.



10–20 seconds  
(page 66)



**APPROXIMATELY 4 MINUTES**

Walk or jog for 2–3 minutes before stretching.



30 seconds  
(page 55)



10–15 seconds  
(page 54)



10 seconds  
each leg  
(page 75)



10–15 seconds  
each leg  
(page 53)



5–8 seconds  
(page 59)



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