

# Benefits of Balance and Flexibility Exercises

## BASIC STRETCHING TIPS

- Warm up with light exercise before stretching.
- Perform dynamic stretching every time BEFORE you exercise or 3 times a week. Perform static stretching every time AFTER you exercise or 3 times a week. Perform balance exercises 1-2 times a week.
- Do not hold your breath while stretching or balancing.
- Do not bounce while stretching or balancing.

## WHY SHOULD YOU STRETCH/IMPROVE BALANCE

- Improve athletic ability
- Decrease the risk of injury
- Increase your range of motion

## Types of Stretching

### DYNAMIC STRETCHING

- Dynamic stretching consists of controlled leg and arm movements that take you (gently) to the limits of your range of motion. In dynamic stretches, there are no bounces or “jerky” movements. An example of dynamic stretching would be slow, controlled leg swings, arm swings, or torso twists.
- This is most beneficial for warming up BEFORE exercising.

### STATIC STRETCHING

- Static stretching consists of pushing the joint to its furthest point and then maintaining or holding that position. Another form of static stretching, known as passive stretching, consists of a person relaxing (passive) while some external force (either a person or an apparatus) brings the joint through its range of motion.
- This form of stretching is most beneficial AFTER exercising and for increasing range of motion.

# Balance Exercises



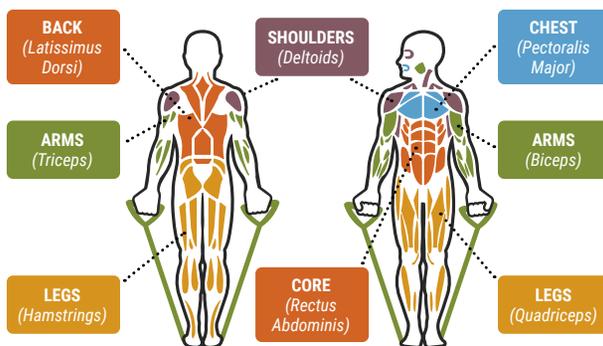
## TREE POSE

While standing, press the bottom of your right foot to the inside of your left thigh just above the knee cap. While holding this position, bring your arms to either a prayer-like position or extend them up over your head. Hold for 10-20 seconds. Repeat on other side.



## HALF MOON POSE

While standing, bring right leg off the ground keeping it straight and behind you. Bring your left arm to the ground (or to a stool for those not as flexible) while your right arm extends up. Hold for 10-20 seconds. Repeat on other side.



## My Goals

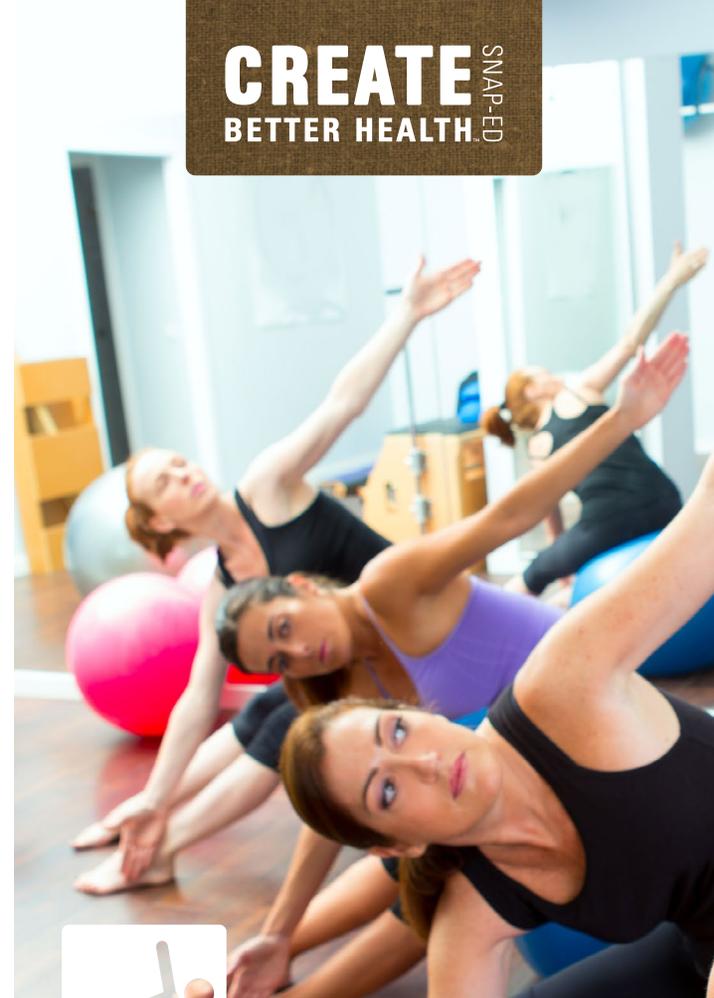
In the next week I will \_\_\_\_\_

In the next month I will \_\_\_\_\_

**EXTENSION**  
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BETTER HEALTH



# BALANCE AND FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility is a form of physical activity achieved through stretching and by moving a joint through its range of motion. Balance is the ability for the body to remain in a stable position when performing particular movements.



### NECK STRETCH

Gently tilt your head to one side as if your ear was listening to your shoulder. Repeat on the other side.



### CHEST STRETCH

While standing or sitting, place hands behind your back and interlock fingers. Straighten arms, sit up tall, and push chest forward. Hold for 5-10 seconds.



### TRICEPS STRETCH

Gently bend arm behind head as if scratching your back. Then, place the opposite hand on elbow and pull down. Hold, and repeat on other arm.



### SEATED TWIST

While seated, Place your left hand on your right knee. Position your right hand behind you. Twist towards your right hand. Hold position for 5-10 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

UPPER BODY   CORE   LOWER BODY

## STATIC STRETCHING



### SHOULDER STRETCH

While standing or sitting, hold one arm out in front of you. Grab shoulder with opposite arm and pull it across your body.



### ABDOMINAL STRETCH

Lay face down on the ground. Lift your upper body upward while your lower body stays touching the floor.



### HIP FLEXOR STRETCH

Keep back straight, tuck bottom under, lunge forward on front leg.



### SEATED ABS STRETCH

While seated, extend arms over head and feet out in front of you. Extend your arms as high as you possibly can in the air while still sitting.



### LUMBAR STRETCH

Reach forward with arms, push chest toward floor, arch back down, backside behind knees.



### HAMSTRING STRETCH

Start with knee slightly bent, then push knee straight as tension allows, push chest toward foot and try to touch your toes.



### ADDUCTOR STRETCH

Sit on the floor. Place the bottoms of your feet together. Next, push down with elbows on knees very gently. Keep back straight.



### QUADRICEPS STRETCH

Stand on one leg, balance, pull foot toward buttocks.



### CALF STRETCH

Keep knee straight and heel down, feet facing forward. Lean toward the wall in front of you.



### GLUTE STRETCH

While lying on ground, place left ankle on right knee. With both hands, pull right knee toward your face. Stretch will be in left glute muscle. Perform on both sides.

## DYNAMIC STRETCHING



### TIP-TOE WALKING

Walk on toes for 45 sec.



### LEG SWINGS

With one arm outstretched to the side and the other against the wall. Swing your outside leg in front and then behind you. Repeat 10 times.



### PUSH UP WITH ROTATION

Start in push-up position. Push up until arms and back are straight. Rotate left hand into the air and lift left foot off the ground and place it on right foot. Repeat on the other side.



### SCORPION

Lie on your stomach with arms outstretched and toes pointed. Kick left foot toward right arm and vice versa Repeat 10 times.



### HURDLER'S KNEE RAISE

While moving forward, raise your leg as if stepping over an object just below waist height, then return to normal walking stride. Repeat 10 times.



### INCH WORM

Stand up, legs together. Bend over, stretch hands in front and place them on ground. Walk your feet toward your hands, then back. Repeat 10 times.



### AIRPLANES

Stretch your arms out straight to the sides and spin them in circles. Alternate directions. Do for 45 sec.



### SWIMMER'S STRETCH

Swing your arms out wide and then bring them in, giving yourself a big hug. Repeat 10 times.



### HEEL-UPS

Rapidly kick heels toward buttocks while moving forward.



### SIDE LUNGES

Spread legs wide and lean side to side. Keep weight on the heel of the foot as you lean. Repeat 10 times.