A person wearing a dark brown suit jacket and a long, light brown scarf is shown from the back, stretching the scarf with both hands. The person's right arm is raised and bent at the elbow, with the hand holding the top of the scarf. The left hand is at the bottom of the scarf, pulling it down. The background is plain white.

A  
Massage  
Therapist's  
Practical Guide  
to Stretching  
first edition

Todd Kuslikis

First Edition, April 2004  
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# INTRODUCTION

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This manual was written, by a massage therapist, for massage therapists. My intent while writing was to create a quick and easy reference tool for massage therapists to turn to while guiding a patient through specific stretches. However, as a health care provider, you must practice what you preach. Following the same advice that you give your patients or clients should be a part of your life as well. One good idea is to get in the habit of following a daily, stretching routine. Everyone needs to stretch daily to maintain a healthy body. The key to staying consistent is to make stretching fun! Impossible you say? When you sit down to do your daily stretches don't just follow the same routine over and over again. Add some creativity and spice it up. Come up with your own stretches and you will naturally making stretching a part of your lifestyle. Explain this to your client as well and they will be more likely to follow the assigned stretches.

## *Why Should I Stretch?*

There are many health benefits that will be gained once someone begins a regular stretch training routine. However, developing great flexibility is a process and takes time and dedication. Just a few of the many benefits you will feel once you begin a stretching routine is: increased range of motion in your joints, a decrease in muscle pain caused by inflammation, and decreased chance of injury due to sport related

activities or everyday activities such as getting out of bed. Stretching also helps prevent muscle imbalance, decreases joint pain due to inflammatory conditions such as tendonitis, and generally makes you feel better!

### *What is Stretching?*

Stretching can be defined simply as elongation or lengthening of muscle fibers. There are a few basic types of stretching that every massage therapist should know.

The first type of stretch is called the *Static Stretch*. Static stretches are done slowly and usually held for at least 20 to 30 seconds. There are two types of static stretching, active and passive. Active stretching is when you perform the stretch. Passive stretching involves a partner helping you through a stretch and can be a very effective way of developing flexibility. However, there must be good communication between both people by letting your partner know when you feel the slightest amount of discomfort. This good communication leads to a decrease in the chance of injury.

The next type of stretching is called *Dynamic Stretching*. Dynamic stretching involves movement and lengthening of the muscle through a full range of motion. A good example of dynamic stretching in sports is swimming. In the water a swimmer will bring their shoulders through a full range of motion creating a good stretch and incredible flexibility through movement. Another type of dynamic stretching is oscillatory stretching. The benefits of oscillatory stretching are tremendous and can be done with all major joints of the body. Oscillatory stretching is a back and forth motion of the joint through its full range of motion. This method of stretching should be done slowly and should NOT be taken past

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one's full range of motion. This manual has many examples of oscillatory stretches and can be given to most patients for overall joint health. When working with patients that have very low flexibility and that are doing oscillatory stretching, it is important that they move through a full range of motion but not to the point that they feel pain. Working with arthritic patients I have found that even when they move through a small range of motion it decreases inflammation and pain dramatically. There is however an exception to this rule. When working with someone that feels pain whether they are moving or not it is important to get them moving even if it is painful at first, assuming that that the problem is not a broken bone, etc. Oscillatory Stretching would be very beneficial for this type of person because it helps lubricate the joint with synovial fluid and helps decrease pain.

The next type of stretching is called *Active Isolated Stretching*. Many massage therapists and highly trained athletes incorporate this type of stretching into their daily routine. Active Isolated Stretching involves having a muscle contract against some form of resistance. Next, having the muscle relax, then bringing it slightly past it's full range of motion into a stretched state, holding it there for no longer than two seconds then bringing it back to a neutral, non-stretched state. It is very important to not hold the stretch for longer than two seconds otherwise the muscle will contract trying to protect itself from being over-stretched. I do not recommend this type of stretching for clients or anyone in a rehabilitative state because there is a high risk of tissue damage.

The last type of stretch is the *Ballistic Stretch*. Many people do this type of stretch wrong. It is normally defined as quickly bouncing in and out of a stretched state. This way of

stretching will almost surely tear a muscle or put it into spasm. However, the correct way to do a ballistic stretch is to slowly come to a stretched state, relaxing, then purposely and slowly oscillating back and forth. Again, stressing that this should be done in a slow and relaxed manner. With the right intent, this can be a very effective way to stretch.

### *When Should I Stretch?*

Always! Stretching is extremely healthy and can be done as much as you like. Stretching should be incorporated into your daily routine just like brushing your teeth. Taking care of your musculo-skeletal system is just as important as any other system. For people with a busy lifestyle, I recommend at least morning and night stretching for 10-15 minutes. Regarding exercise, stretching should be performed before and after the activity to maintain and increase muscle elasticity. Stretching before exercising is suggested to prepare the muscles for exercise by decreasing muscle stiffness and increasing blood flow. Post exercise stretching has been proven to help remove waste products of exercise such as lactic acid as well as greatly increase overall flexibility. As a general rule, it is more important to stretch after a workout, however, both are very important.

### *Who Should Stretch?*

Everyone should be stretching on a daily basis regardless of his or her age or overall flexibility. It is however, especially important for people with joint problems such as arthritis or other debilitating disorders.

*Note: If you have had any recent physical problems, recently had surgery, or have been inactive or sedentary for quite some time, please consult*

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*your professional health care provider before starting a stretching or exercising routine.*

### *Where Should I Stretch?*

Stretching can be done anywhere. I usually recommend a safe, quiet environment where you can focus specifically on relaxing into a stretch and on your breath. However, you can just as easily obtain all the benefits of stretch training at your desk or at home watching television. As a massage therapist, when I am recommending stretches to a patient, I sometimes hear them say, "I try to stretch every day, but I just can't remember to do them." One way around this problem is to have them set up "triggers." Triggers are certain objects or cues that remind them to stretch. For example, I was once working with an office manager who had this problem. I suggested that every time he had to get up and make his rounds checking on the employees he should first do two of the assigned stretches. He came back in a couple of days and said it worked. Another trigger that you could use is every time you get up to go to the restroom or get a drink of water, stretch.

### *How Should I Stretch?*

By far, this is the most important question to ask. The old adage, "It is not what you do, but how you do it that counts," plays especially true in regard to stretching. Whether you are doing static, oscillatory, or Active-Isolated stretches there should be no pain. When you feel pain, this is the body's way of telling you there is something wrong. There are two important principles to pay particular attention to when performing any type of stretch; breath and relaxation.

Breathing should be done using the lower belly. When breathing in, the lower belly should expand or push out, when

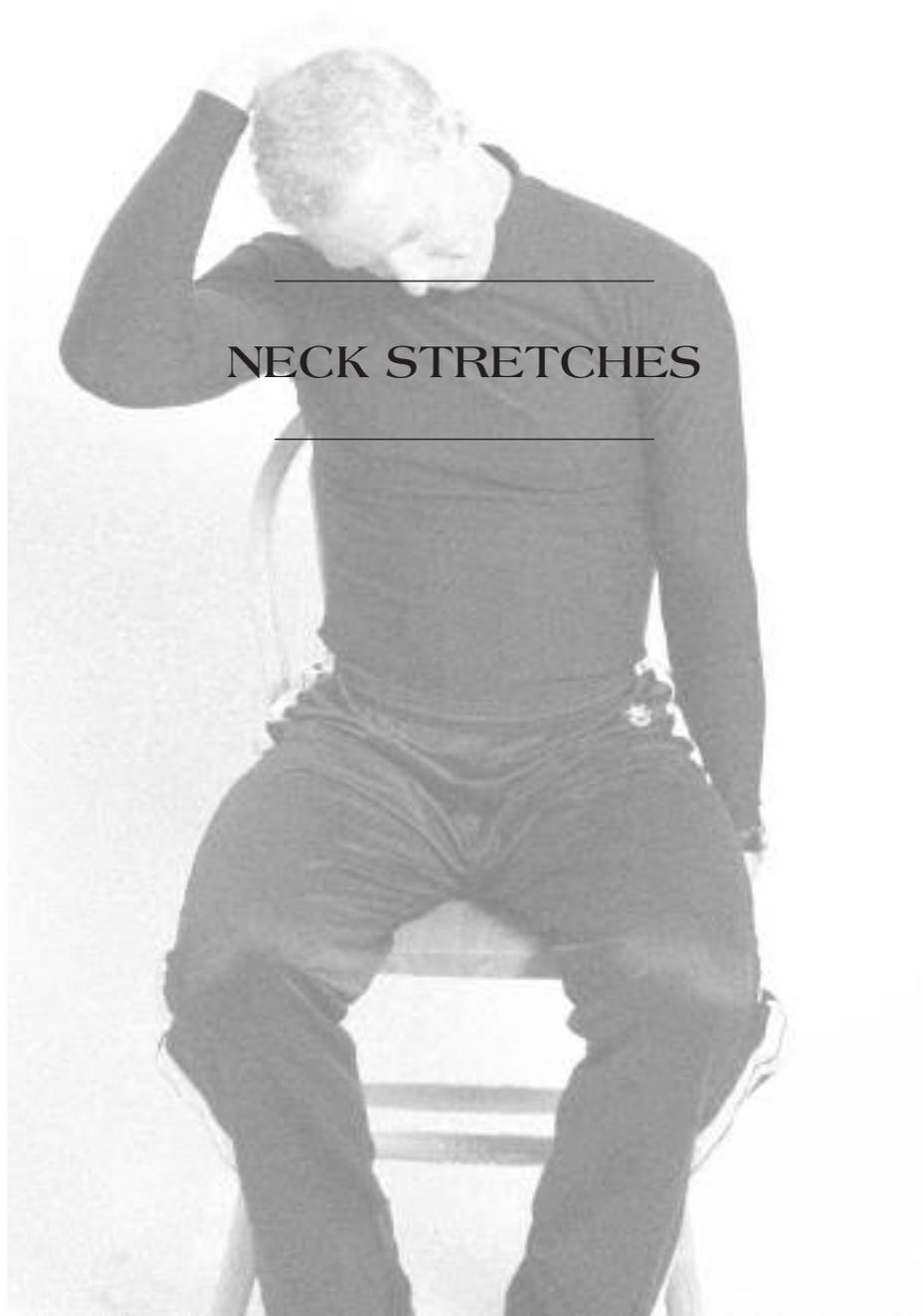
breathing out, the lower belly should come in. A perfect example of this relaxed way of breathing is the way a baby breathes. A baby breathes naturally using their diaphragm expanding the lungs fully to absorb as much oxygen as possible. This type of breathing helps bring more oxygen to the muscles as well as help the body relax fully into the stretch.

The second important principle is relaxation. It is very important to stay relaxed while stretching because **A MUSCLE WILL ONLY STRETCH IF IT'S RELAXED!** When you stretch, you should stay as relaxed as possible and go to the point where you feel a gentle tug but no pain. This ensures that the muscle is elongating naturally and not tearing.

### *Modifying Stretches for Each Patient*

Everybody is different. This is important to remember when working with a patient. Many people can do the same stretch posture but feel the stretch on a completely different part of their body. Take into consideration that some people will not be able to do a particular stretch sitting on the floor. As a therapist, you must tailor to each individual otherwise they will not get the benefit. This manual was written with that in mind and most of the stretches presented can be modified to accommodate all types of people.

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## **Chair Levator Stretch**

**Procedure:** 1. Sit in a chair, clasping the bottom of the seat with your left hand.  
2. With your right hand reach over your head and gently pull your head at a 45 degree angle toward your right.

**Muscles Being Stretched:**

Levator Scapula

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Modification:** May perform this stretch in an oscillatory manner using your right hand to push up on head after you have stretched.

**Important:** The angle in this stretch is especially important and depending on how your head is placed, you will feel the stretch in a different part of the neck.

**Type of Stretch:** Static or Oscillatory



## **Chair Upper Trap Stretch**

**Procedure:** 1. Sit in a chair, clasping the bottom of the seat with your left hand.  
2. With your right hand reach over your head and gently pull your head at a 90 degree angle toward your right.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Upper Trapezius, Scalenes

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Important:** The angle in this stretch is especially important and depending on how your head is placed, you will feel the stretch in a different part of the neck.

**Type of Stretch:** Static or Oscillatory



## **Neck Turns**

**Procedure:** 1. Turn your neck to one direction as far as you can without straining. 2. Repeat on the opposite side.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Splenius, Inner Spinal Muscles, SCM

**Duration of Stretch:** 1 min.

**Type of Stretch:** Static or Oscillatory



## **Scalene Stretch**

**Procedure:** 1. Sit in a chair, clasping the bottom of the seat with your left hand. 2. Breathe out, rotate your head to the right, and turn your head toward the ceiling. 3. Repeat on the opposite side.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Scalenes, SCM

**Duration of Stretch:** 20-30 sec.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



## **Therapist Notes:**

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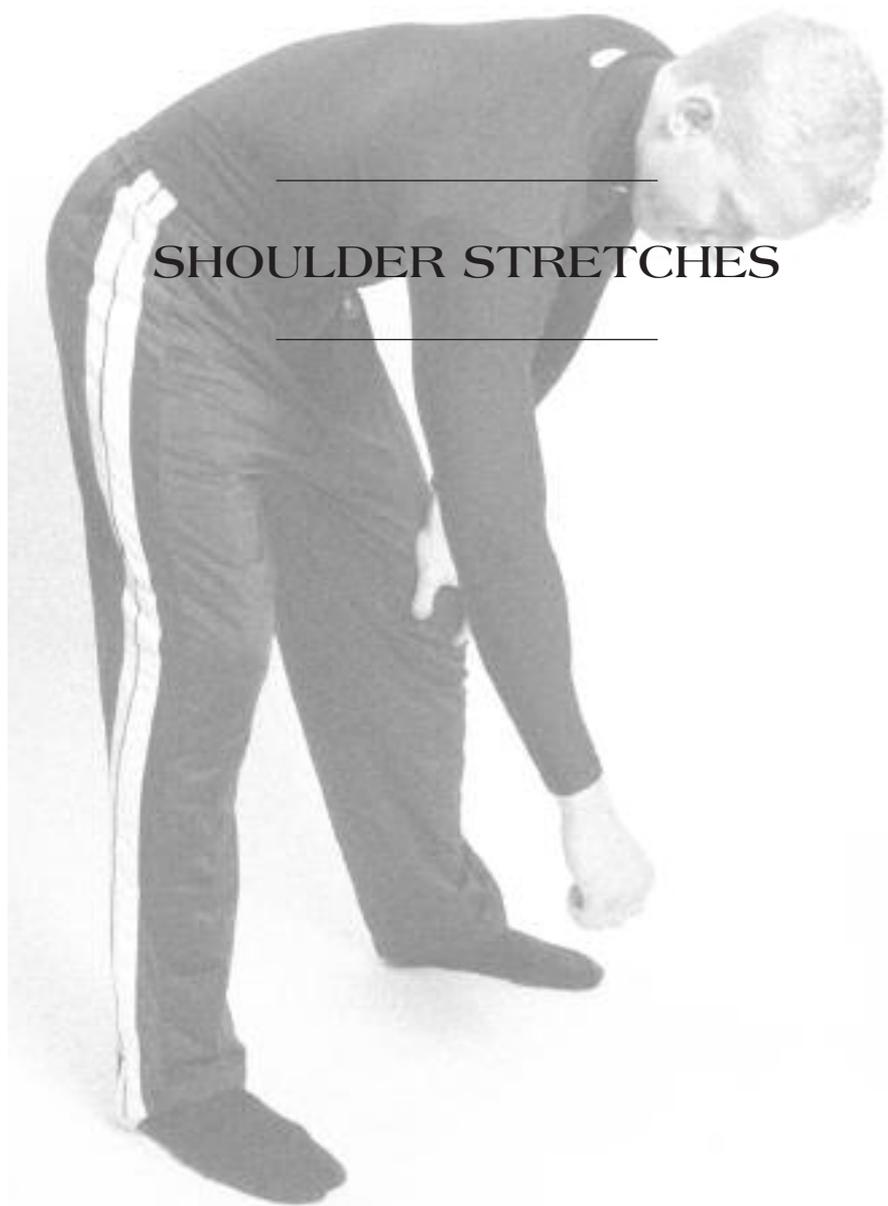
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## ***Shoulder Shrugs***

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**Procedure:** 1. Raise your shoulders as high as you can and hold for 2-3 seconds. 2. Relax shoulders completely.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Pectoralis Minor, Lower Trapezius

**Duration of Stretch:** 1 min.

**Important:** Try to bring your shoulders into full elevation to get a complete stretch on these muscles.



## ***Shoulder Circles***

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**Procedure:** 1. Rotate your shoulders in a circular motion through a full range of motion. 2. Repeat opposite direction.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** General stretch for all shoulder muscles.

**Duration of Stretch:** 1 min. for both directions.

**Important:** Rotate through full range of motion.

**Type of Stretch:** Oscillatory



## ***Therapist Notes:***

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## Stretches for External and Internal Rotators of the Shoulder

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### ***Horizontal Shoulder Oscillation***

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**Procedure:** 1. Bring your elbow up parallel to shoulder joint and keep elbow at 90degrees. 2. Rotate humerus external (lateral) to internal (medial) through a full range of motion.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Anterior Deltoid, Pectoralis Major, Subscapularis, Teres Major, Latissimus Dorsi, Infraspinatus, Teres Minor, Posterior Deltoid

**Duration of Stretch:** 2 min. on each side

**Important:** Stretch should be done slowly.

**Type of Stretch:** Oscillitory



### ***Vertical Shoulder Oscillation***

---

**Procedure:** 1. Flex your elbow to a 90 degree angle and keep it close to your side. 2. Rotate arm lateral to medial through a full range of motion.



**Muscles Being Stretched:**

Anterior Deltoid, Pectoralis Major, Subscapularis, Teres Major, Latissimus Dorsi, Infraspinatus, Teres Minor, Posterior Deltoid



**Duration of Stretch:** 2 min. on each side.

**Important:** Stretch should be done slowly.

**Type of Stretch:** Oscillatory

***Single Pectoral Door Stretch***

---

**Procedure:** 1. Position yourself next to a door or wall. 2. Place your elbow at 90degrees on a door or wall and rotate your body away from that arm.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Pectoralis Minor and Major

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Modification:** Raise your elbow more superior to effect the pectoralis minor muscle.

**Type of Stretch:** Static

***Therapist Notes:***

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## ***Double Pectoral Corner Stretch***

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**Procedure:** 1. Position yourself facing roughly 2 feet away from a corner of a room or an open doorway. 2. Position your elbow parallel to your shoulder against the doorway or wall and lean your body either toward the corner or through the door.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Pectoralis Major and Minor

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



## ***Look Toward the Sky (Fix Kyphotic curves)***

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**Procedure:** 1. Clasp your hands together behind you with palms facing each other. 2. Lean back into spinal extension.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Pectoralis Major and Minor

**Duration of Stretch:** Hold each stretch for 2 sec. and repeat 8-10 rep.

**Important:** During this stretch try not to lean your neck back, just your upper back. This will keep unwanted stress off of your neck.

**Type of Stretch:** Static and Oscillatory



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## Stretches for Flexors and Extensors of the Shoulder

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### ***Tricep Stretch***

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**Procedure:** 1. Position your arm behind your head with your elbow in full flexion.  
2. Grasp your elbow with the opposite hand and pull your elbow posterior.

**Muscles Being Stretched:**

Triceps Brachii

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Important:** Keep shoulders relaxed.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



### ***Towel Stretch***

---

**Procedure:** 1. Position your right arm behind your head holding a rolled towel in your hand. 2. Position your left arm behind your back grabbing the other end of the rolled towel. 3. With your right arm pull upwards continuing to hold onto the towel with your left hand. 4. Relax, then with your left arm pull downwards continuing to hold onto the towel with your right arm. 5. Switch sides.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Triceps Brachii and general muscles of the shoulder.

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



## ***Bicep Stretch***

---

**Procedure:** 1. Bring your right arm behind your body with elbow full extended and hand fully supinated. 2. Position your left hand as if you were stretching the fingers. 3. With your left hand pull your right hand toward the sky.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Biceps Brachii

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Important:** The humerus must be in full extension to get a complete stretch on the bicep.

**Modification:** If your patient can not bring their assisting hand behind their back they may exclude this hand and simply bring the humerus into full extension to feel the stretch.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



## ***Posterior Deltoid Stretch***

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**Procedure:** 1. Fully adduct your arm in front of your body at chest level. 2. Place opposite forearm behind elbow and pull shoulder medial.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Posterior Deltoid

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Important:** Keep shoulder relaxed!

**Type of Stretch:** Static



## **Anterior Deltoid Stretch**

**Procedure:** 1. Position yourself so the right side of your body is facing a wall. 2. Bring your elbow into full extension and parallel with your shoulder. 3. Place your arm against the wall with your palm facing inwards. 4. Lean your right shoulder into the wall and rotate away from the wall with your body.



**Muscles Being Stretched:** Anterior Deltoid, Pectoralis Major

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Type of Stretch:** Static

## **Shoulder Distraction**

**Procedure:** 1. Standing, bend your torso forward keeping your spine straight. Stabilize your torso with one hand on your knee. 2. Circle your arm in a clockwise direction, letting the weight of your arm distract the shoulder joint. With each repetition increase the size of the circle. 3. Repeat in other direction and on other side.



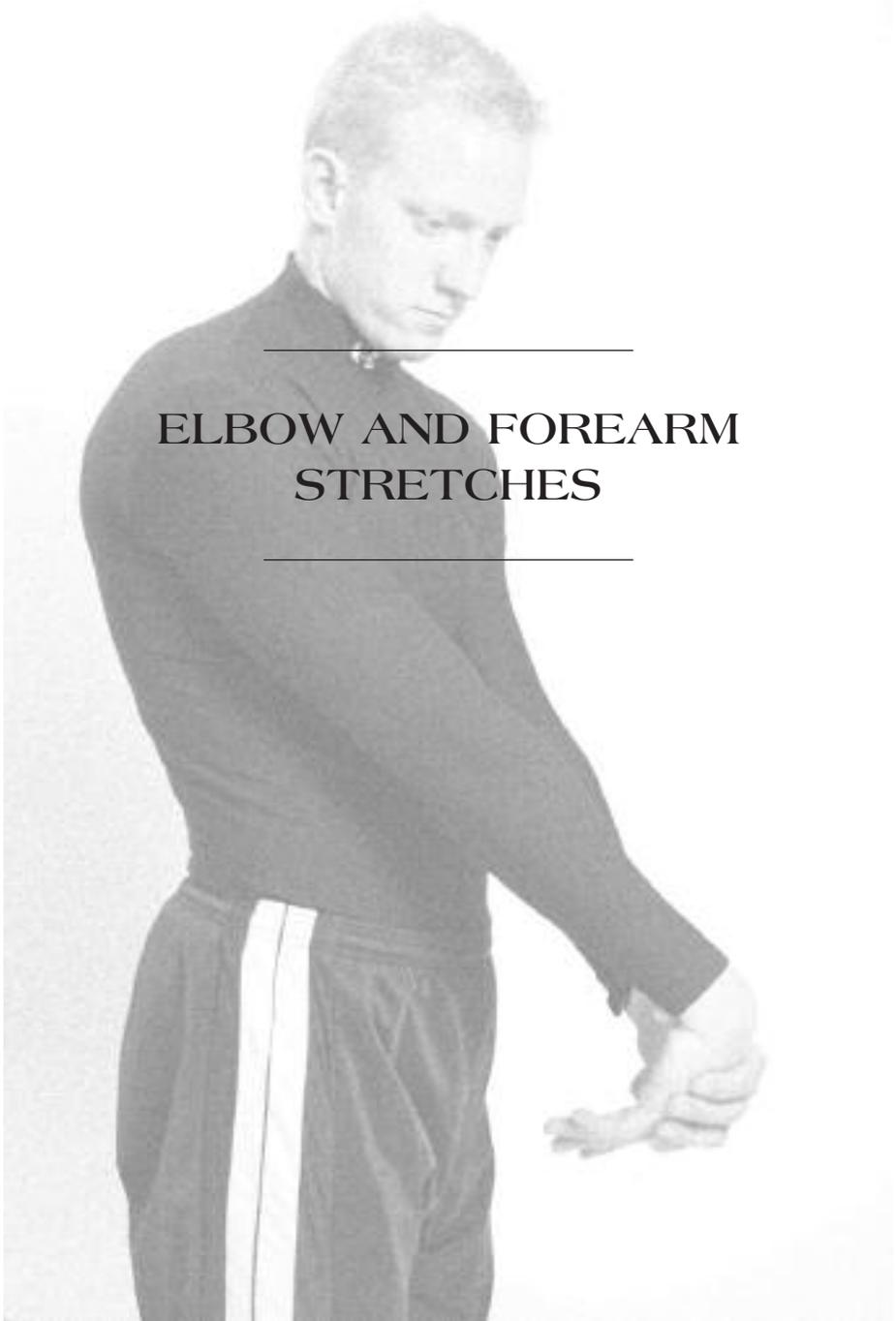
**Specific Muscles Being Stretched:** General stretch for glenohumeral joint.

**Duration of Stretch:** 2 min. on each side

**Important:** Use your body to swing your arm and keep your shoulder muscles relaxed.

**Type of Stretch:** Oscillatory

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## ELBOW AND FOREARM STRETCHES

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## ***Elbow Oscillation***

**Procedure:** 1. Bring your elbow into full flexion. 2. Bring elbow into full extension

**Muscles Being Stretched:** General stretch for elbow attachments of bicep and tricep.

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Important:** Movement looks like a "bicep curl."

**Type of Stretch:** Oscillitory



## ***Pronation-Supination***

**Procedure:** 1. Flex your elbow to a 90 degree angle. 2. Bring your hand into a full supinated position. 3. Bring your hand into a full pronated position.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** General stretch for supinators and pronators of the forearm.

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Type of Stretch:** Oscillitory



**Flexor  
Compartment Stretch**

---

**Procedure:** 1. Put your elbow into full extension in front of your body with your hand supinated and extended. 2. Grab your fingers INCLUDING THUMB with your opposite hand and pull the fingers toward your body.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Flexor Compartment Muscles

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Important:** It is important on this stretch to grab the thumb as well as the fingers.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



**Extensor  
Compartment Stretch**

---

**Procedure:** 1. Put your elbow into full extension in front of your body with your hand pronated and flexed. 2. Grab the back of your hand and pull toward body.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Extensor Compartment Muscles

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



**Therapist Notes:**

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**WRIST AND HAND  
STRETCHES**

## ***Wrist Circles***

**Procedure:** 1. Rotate your hand in circular motion through full range of motion.  
2. Repeat the other direction.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** All muscles attaching into the wrist

**Duration of Stretch:** 1 min.

Type of Stretch: Oscillitory



## ***Wrist Waving***

**Procedure:** 1. Bring your hand into full inversion. 2. Bring your hand into full eversion.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Adductors and Abductors of the wrist

**Duration of Stretch:** 1 min.

Type of Stretch: Oscillitory



### **Wrist Flicking**

**Procedure:** 1. Bring your hand into full extension. 2. Bring your hand into full flexion. (same motion as shooting a basketball)

**Muscles Being Stretched:**

Flexors and Extensors of the wrist

**Duration of Stretch:** 1 min.

**Type of Stretch:** Oscillatory



### **Hand Shaking**

**Procedure:** 1. Relax your hand then shake it vigorously in all directions.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** All muscles that attach into the wrist

**Duration of Stretch:** 15 sec.

**Type of Stretch:** Ballistic Oscillatory



### **Hand Stretch**

**Procedure:** 1. Open your hand as wide as it goes. 2. Relax.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Flexor Muscles of the Fingers

**Duration of Stretch:** Hold stretch for 2 sec. then relax.

Repeat 8-10 rep.

**Type of Stretch:** Oscillatory

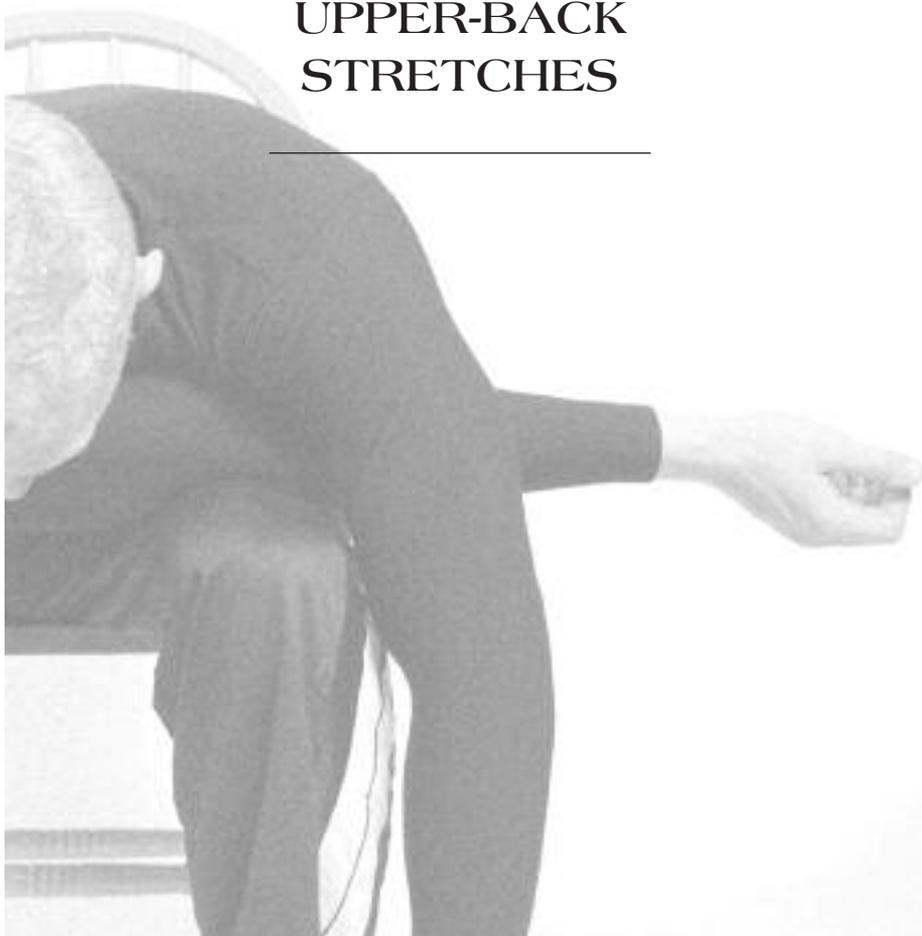




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## UPPER-BACK STRETCHES

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## **Standing**

### **Rhomboid Pull**

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**Procedure:** 1. Grab a pole or edge of a doorway with both hands. Pull backwards making sure your spine is straight.

**Muscles Being Stretched:**

Rhomboids, Middle Trapezius

Duration of Stretch: 30 sec.

**Important:** Make sure not to lean forward otherwise the emphasis will switch to your Lat muscle.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



## **Seated**

### **Rhomboid Pull**

---

**Procedure:** 1. Sit in a chair with your right elbow crossed over your left knee.  
2. Keeping a straight spine, bend forward until you feel a stretch in the middle of your back.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Rhomboids, Middle Trapezius

**Duration Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Modification:** How you position your left arm also makes a difference in the depth of your stretch. Cross your left arm over your right arm and it will make the stretch more pronounced.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



### **Lat. Pull**

**Procedure:** 1. Grab a pole or edge of a doorway with both hands. Pull backwards leaning your torso forward and extending your arms.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Latissimus Dorsi

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



### **Seated Lat. Pull**

**Procedure:** 1. Sit on the ground with your legs underneath you. 2. Extend your arms above you and then lean forward. 3. Walk your fingers forward to create a greater stretch in your back.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Latissimus Dorsi

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Important:** It is important to make sure you are sitting on your legs throughout the whole stretch.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



### **Therapist Notes:**

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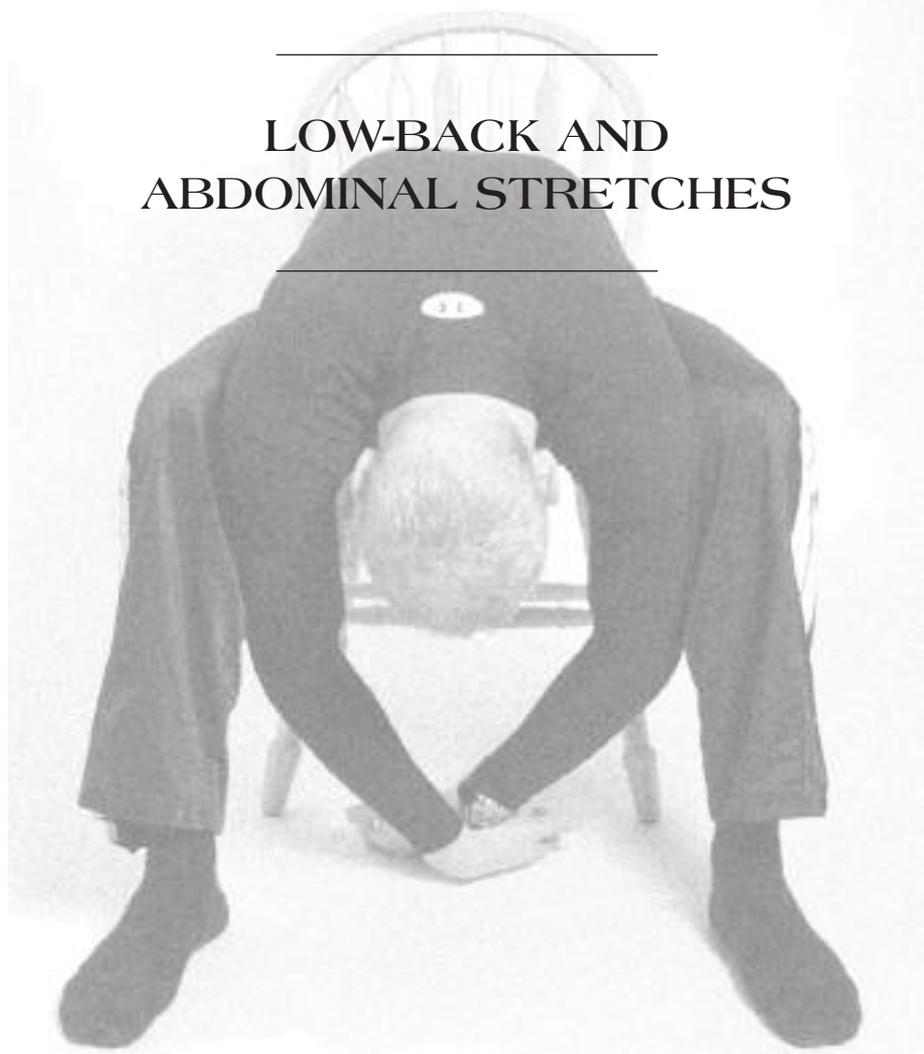
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## LOW-BACK AND ABDOMINAL STRETCHES

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## **Seated Knee Circles**

**Procedure:** 1. Sit on the ground with your legs in an “Indian Posture.” 2. Put both of your hands on one knee. 3.

Rotate and bend your torso toward the opposite knee and begin circling your

nose around this knee. **USE YOUR TORSO TO MAKE YOUR NOSE CIRCLE THE KNEE, NOT JUST YOUR HEAD!** 4. Once you have gone both directions over one knee, switch to the opposite knee.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Quadratus Lumborum, Erector Spinae, Transversospinalis

**Duration of Stretch:** 1 min. for each side.

**Important:** It is crucial to circle your nose using your torso not just your neck.

**Type of Stretch:** Oscillatory



## **Modified Knee Circles (static)**

**Procedure:** 1. Sit on the ground with your legs in an “Indian Posture.” 2. Cup both of your hands around one knee then lean forward toward the same knee.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Quadratus Lumborum, Erector Spinae, Transversospinalis

**Duration of Stretch:** 1 min. for each side.

**Important:** This is a good stretch to focus on your breath to fully relax into the stretch.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



## **Rag Doll**

**Procedure:** 1. Sit at the edge of chair with your feet shoulder width apart and parallel. 2. Slowly bend forward until you feel the stretch in your back. Your hands should gently fall between your legs.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Erector Spinae, Transversospinalis

**Duration of Stretch:** 1-2 min.

**Modification:** Can be done standing, sitting on a chair, or sitting on the floor.

**Important:** It is very important to come out of this stretch very slowly. Use your hands to slowly push off the ground and then walk up legs to knees. If you don't use your legs you may send your back into spasm.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



## **Seated Spinal Rotation**

**Procedure:** 1. Sit in a chair and place your right hand over your left knee and your left hand behind you. 2. Twist to the left using your hands to facilitate the stretch.

**Muscles Being Stretched:**

Transversospinalis

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec., may also be done in an oscillatory manner.

**Important:** Relax in the middle of the stretch and you will notice you can rotate even farther.

**Type of Stretch:** Static or Oscillatory



## ***Laying Spinal Rotation***

**Procedure:** 1. Lay on the ground in a supine position with your arms extended out to the side like an airplane. 2. Leave your left leg on ground and bring your right leg straight up above you keeping your knee straight. 3. Let your right leg fall to the left to create a spinal rotation.



**Muscles Being Stretched:** Transversospinalis

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Modification:** You may look with your head toward the opposite direction to create an even greater stretch.

**Type of Stretch:** Static

## ***Laying Abdominal Stretch***

**Procedure:** 1. Lay on the ground in a prone position. 2. Position your elbows underneath your chest and using your elbows push off of the ground.



**Muscles Being Stretched:**

Abdominus Rectus

**Duration of Stretch:** 20-30 sec.

**Modification:** To obtain an even greater stretch, instead of using your elbows to push off of the ground use your hands and extend the elbows.

**Important:** For people with inflammed low back muscles be careful with this stretch as it might cause their back to spasm.

**Type of Stretch:** Static

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HIP AND THIGH  
STRETCHES

## ***Hip Distraction***

**Procedure:** 1. Stand on a stair with your right foot. 2. Place an ankle weight around your left ankle and have this leg hang off of the stair letting the ankle weight and gravity distract the hip joint.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** General stretch for hip joint

**Duration of Stretch:** Hold for 1-2 min.

**Important:** This is a spectacular stretch for hip problems especially hip compression.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



## ***Laying***

### ***Hip Oscillation (Supine)***

**Procedure:** 1. Lay on your back with one leg straight. 2. Bring your other knee toward your chest then rotate it lateral to inferior then superior again.

3. Repeat and switch directions.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** General stretch for all hip muscles

**Duration of Stretch:** 1 min. for each side.

**Important:** This is a great strengthening exercise as well but may put strain on your low back.

**Type of Stretch:** Oscillatory



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## Stretches for Lateral Rotators of the Hip

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### **Standing**

### **Lateral Rotator Stretch**

**Procedure:** 1. In a standing posture, position both legs into full medial rotation. (The toes of both feet will be pointed at each other.) 2. Rotate gently one direction and then the other.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Piriformis, Gemellus superior and inferior, Obturator Externus, Quadratus Femoris, Gluteus Maximus

**Duration of Stretch:** 1 min.

**Important:** Be careful with this stretch because it may put too much torque on your knee.

**Type of Stretch:** Oscillatory



### **Therapist Notes:**

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## ***Pretzel Stretch***

**Procedure:** 1. Sit on the ground placing one leg in complete lateral rotation in front of you. 2. Position your other leg over this leg also in complete lateral rotation. 3. Bend forward with your spine straight to feel the stretch.



**Muscles Being Stretched:** Piriformis, Gemellus superior and inferior, Obturator Externus, Quadratus Femoris, Gluteus Maximus

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Important:** This is an advanced stretch and should be given to healthy individuals especially athletes.

**Type of Stretch:** Static

## ***Laying Businessman Stretch***

**Procedure:** 1. Lay on the ground flexing one knee and positioning it near your chest. 2. Place opposite ankle over this knee with this leg in lateral rotation. 3.



Grab behind your ankle and knee and pull toward your head.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Piriformis, Gemellus superior and inferior, Obturator Externus, Quadratus Femoris, Gluteus Maximus

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Important:** To get even more of a stretch place elbow on opposite knee you are grabbing and push inferior. This is an advanced stretch and should be given to people with good flexibility.

**Type of Stretch:** Static

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## **Seated Businessman Stretch**

**Procedure:** 1. Sit in a chair and cross one leg over the opposite thigh positioning the ankle on top of the knee. 2. Lean torso forward over leg keeping spine straight.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Piriformis, Gemellus superior and inferior, Obturator Externus, Quadratus Femoris, Gluteus Maximus

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Modification:** If the patient can't bring their ankle above their knee have them bring it up as far as they can comfortably and then perform the stretch. It is important however to make sure the leg is laterally rotated.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



## **Sleeping Dragon**

**Procedure:** 1. Lay down on the floor in a prone position. 2. Place one leg underneath you with your knee bent and slightly laterally rotated. (Only one hip is touching the ground.) 3. Lean forward with straight spine.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Piriformis, Gemellus superior and inferior, Obturator Externus, Quadratus Femoris, Gluteus Maximus

**Duration of Stretch:** 1-2 min.

**Important:** Relax fully into stretch making sure you do not feel pain.

**Modification:** For a deeper stretch you may laterally rotate your front leg even farther.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



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## Stretches for Medial Rotators of the Hip

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### ***Laying***

### ***Hip Oscillation (Prone)***

**Procedure:** 1. Lay on the ground face down with your chin resting in your palms.  
2. Bring your knees into flexion and begin laterally and medially rotating your legs through a full range of motion.



**Muscles Being Stretched:** All lateral and medial hip rotators

**Duration of Stretch:** 2 min.

**Important:** This is a great stretch for general rehabilitation of the hip joint.

**Type of Stretch:** Oscillatory

### ***Therapist Notes:***

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## Stretches for Abductors of the Hip

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### **Standing**

#### **Wall Abductor Stretch**

**Procedure:** 1. Stand with the left side of your body facing a wall. 2. Adduct your left leg as far as possible in front of your right leg. 3. Keeping your weight completely on your right leg push your hip using your body to the right as far as possible.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Gluteus Medius, Gluteus Minimus, Tensor Fasciae Latae, Sartorius, IT Band

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



#### **Double Straight-Legged Abductor Stretch**

**Procedure:** 1. Sit on the floor with your legs positioned in a lateral hip rotation with knees slightly bent. 2. Bend forward keeping spine straight.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Gluteus Medius, Gluteus Minimus, Tensor Fasciae Latae, Sartorius, IT Band

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Type of Stretch:** Static





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## Stretches for Adductors of the Hip

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### ***Butterfly***

**Procedure:** 1. Sit on the floor with the soles of your feet together, knees pointed outward. 2. Grab your ankles with both hands and push your knees toward the floor using your elbows.



**Muscles Being Stretched:** Adductor Brevis, Longus, Magnus, Gracilis, Pectineus

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Important:** Make sure to keep your spine straight.

**Type of Stretch:** Static

### ***Supine Butterfly***

**Procedure:** 1. Lay on the floor with the soles of your feet together, knees pointed outward. 2. Relax and let gravity fascilitate the stretch.



**Muscles Being Stretched:** Adductor Brevis, Longus, Magnus, Gracilis, Pectineus

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Important:** This is an excellent stretch to practice focusing on your breath.

**Type of Stretch:** Static

## ***Prone Butterfly***

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**Procedure:** 1. Lay face down on the ground with legs in a butterfly position. 2. Relax and let your own body weight perform the stretch.



**Muscles Being Stretched:** Adductor Brevis, Longus, Magnus, Gracilis, Pectineus

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Important:** You may alter this stretch into an oscillatory one by slowly rocking back and forth.

**Type of Stretch:** Static or Oscillatory

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## **Stretches for Flexors of the Hip**

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### ***Lunging Hip-Flexor Stretch***

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**Procedure:** 1. Place your right foot on the ground facing forward with your right knee at a 90degree angle. 2. Place your left knee about 12inches on the ground behind your front foot. 3. Lock fingers together and push off front knee going into back extension. 4. Push your pelvis toward the floor.



**Muscles Being Stretched:** Iliopsoas, Pectineus

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 secs

**Important:** If you are not feeling a stretch try separating your front foot and back knee farther away from each other.

**Type of Stretch:** Static

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## ***Single Knee To Chest***

**Procedure:** 1. Lay on the ground in a supine position. 2. Grab your left leg underneath your knee and pull towards your chest.



**Muscles Being Stretched:** Glute Max

**Duration of Stretch:** 15 sec.

**Modification:** Grab both knees at the same time and pull into chest.

**Important:** Keep your upper back and head relaxed on the floor, only your leg should be rising.

**Type of Stretch:** Static

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# Stretches for Extensors of the Hip

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## ***Modified Sleeping Dragon for Glute***

**Procedure:** 1. Lay down on the floor in a prone position. 2. Place your right leg underneath you with the knee bent keeping your right hip on the ground. 3. Lean your torso slowly to the left and toward the ground to feel the stretch.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Gluteus Maximus, Medius, and Minimus

**Duration of Stretch:** 1-2 min.

**Important:** Make sure to keep the bottom hip on the ground.

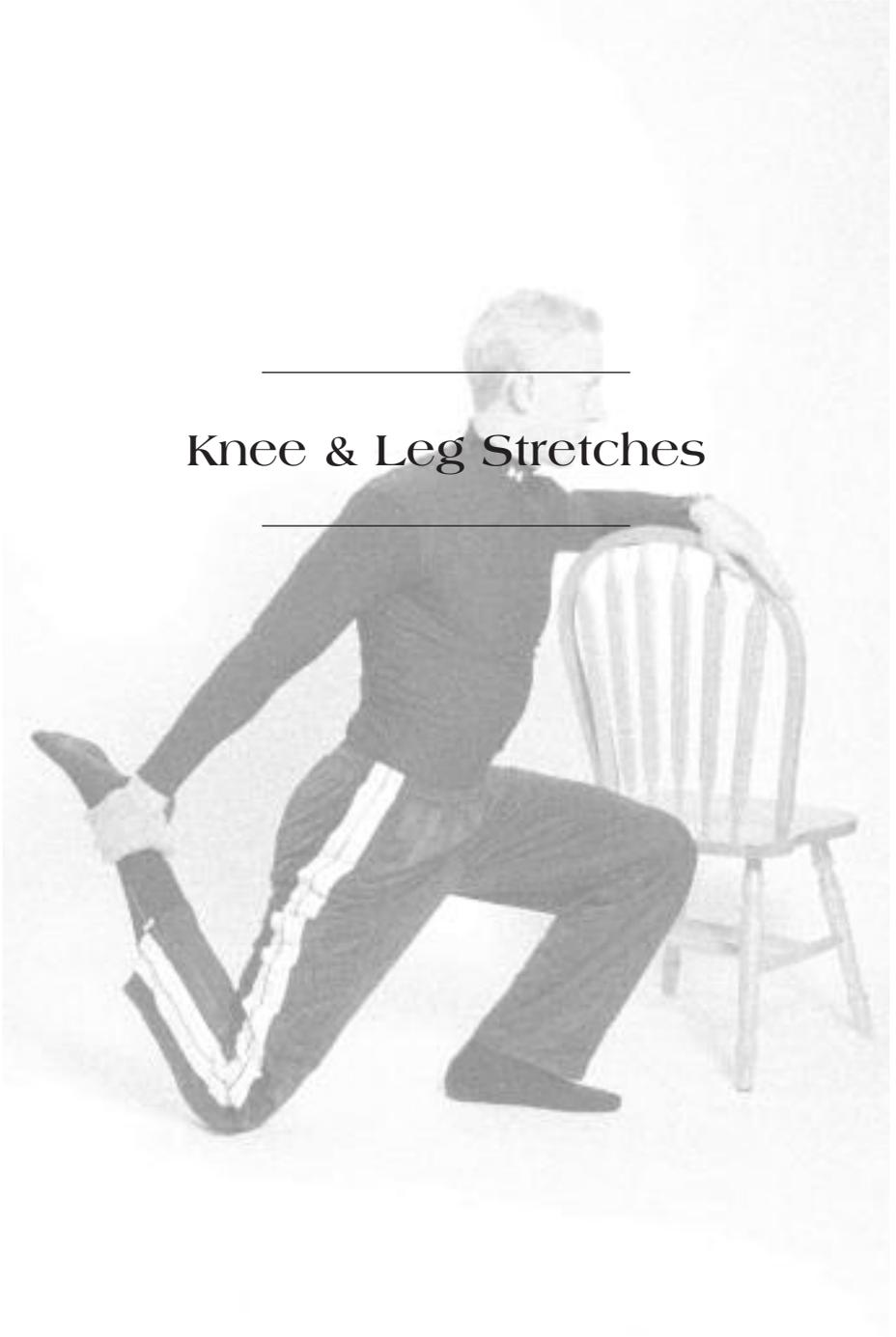
**Type of Stretch:** Static



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## Knee & Leg Stretches

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## Stretches for Extensors of the Knee

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### ***Lunging Quad Stretch***

**Procedure:** 1. Place one foot on the ground facing forward and place opposite knee about 12 inches behind the front foot on the ground. 2. Grab the back foot and pull it toward body. 3. Rotate pelvis forward to feel the stretch.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Vastus Lateralis, Vastus Intermedius, Vastus Medialis, Rectus Femoris

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



### ***Standing Quad Stretch***

**Procedure:** 1. In a standing position grab your left foot and pull it toward your left glute muscle keeping your pelvis tilted in. 2. Pull your leg into hip extension to get a greater stretch.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Vastus Lateralis, Vastus Intermedius, Vastus Medialis, Rectus Femoris

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Important:** It is very important to rotate your pelvis in.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



## **Double Seated Quad Stretch**

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**Procedure:** 1. Sit on the ground with your feet behind you and your knees in front. 2. Lay backwards until you feel a stretch in the quads.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Vastus Lateralis, Vastus Intermedius, Vastus Medialis, Rectus Femoris

**Duration of Stretch:** 20-30 secs

**Important:** If you feel any pain or discomfort in your knees stop immediately!

**Type of Stretch:** Static



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## Stretches for Flexors of the Knee

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### **Double Straight Legged Hamstring Stretch**

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**Procedure:** 1. Sit on the floor with your legs straight keeping toes pointed toward the sky. 2. Lean straight forward with your spine straight.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Gluteus Maximus, Biceps Femoris, Semitendinosus, Semimembranosus (Hamstrings)

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Important:** It is important to keep your spine straight otherwise the stretch will shift to your back instead of your hamstrings.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



## ***Single Straight Legged Hamstring Stretch***

**Procedure:** 1. Sit on a table with one leg resting off of it. 2. Extend your other leg onto the table with toes pointed up. Bend forward keeping your spine straight.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Gluteus Maximus, Biceps Femoris, Semitendinosus, Semimembranosus (Hamstrings)

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Important:** It is important to keep your spine straight otherwise the stretch will shift to your back instead of your hamstrings.

**Type of Stretch:** Static



## ***Knee Oscillation***

**Procedure:** 1. Sit on a table with your legs dangling off of the edge. 2. Oscillate leg back and forth through full range of motion.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Extensor and Flexor Muscles of the Knee

**Duration of Stretch:** 2 min.

**Important:** This is one of the best stretching exercises you can do for rehabilitation for knee problems

**Type of Stretch:** Oscillatory



### **Bent Knee Torque**

**Procedure:** 1. Sit in chair with your knee bent at a 90 degree angle. 2. Rotate your foot to the left then to the right through a full range of motion. (Your foot will be pivoting on the heel.)



**Muscles Being Stretched:** Biceps Femoris, Semitendinosus, Semimembranosus, Popliteus

**Duration of Stretch:** 1 min.

**Important:** Your knee has to be bent for this stretch to work.

**Type of Stretch:** Oscillitory

### **Lunging Calf Stretch**

**Procedure:** 1. Face a wall and place your right foot about 6 in. away from the wall and your left foot back in a full lunge position. 2. Place both hands on the wall and slowly bend your front knee.



**Muscles Being Stretched:** Soleus, Gastrocnemius

**Duration of Stretch:** 30 sec.

**Type of Stretch:** Static

### **Therapist Notes:**

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ANKLE & FOOT  
STRETCHES

## ***Ankle Circles***

**Procedure:** 1. Sit in a chair with one leg extended. 2. Rotate your foot clockwise then counterclockwise through full range of motion.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** All muscles that attach into the foot

**Duration of Stretch:** 1 min.

**Type of Stretch:** Oscillitory



## ***Toe Stretch***

**Procedure:** 1. Sit in a chair with one leg extended. 2. Lift your toes toward the ceiling.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** General stretch for all toes as well as the plantar fasciae

**Duration of Stretch:** 1 min.

**Type of Stretch:** Static or Oscillitory



## **Foot Tapping**

**Procedure:** 1. Sit in a chair with one leg extended. 2. Bring your foot into full extension then into full flexion.

**Muscles Being Stretched:** Dorsi flexors and Plantar Flexors of the ankle

**Duration of Stretch:** 1 min.

**Important:** This is an excellent stretching exercise to quickly get rid of shin splints.

**Modification:** May also be done standing.

**Type of Stretch:** Oscillatory



## ***Getting Your Client to Stretch***

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As any massage therapist knows trying to get a client to comply with their assigned stretches can feel like pulling teeth. You both know that stretching will dramatically improve the recovery time for most muscular problems, but alas, they still don't do it. What do you do? One way to solve this problem is to have your client chart exactly when they are doing their stretches. In the following table there is a place to write what stretches they are doing, how many repetitions or how long you want them to hold the stretch, and a box for the client to mark an X each time he/she completes the stretch. There are four boxes per day for each stretch.

Feel free to make copies of the table and use it for your clients. Also, one of the most important ways to inspire your client to do their stretches is for you to do your stretches. Use this table for yourself as well and follow it with diligence. You will dramatically notice a difference in your flexibility and your overall level of energy.







*A Massage Therapist's  
Practical Guide to Stretching*

is the comprehensive reference manual that gives every professional therapist a level of assistance only possible with quick step-by-step directions and reference photos. With many years experience in martial arts and relaxation techniques, Todd Kuslikis builds on his experience while helping others to give the most complete treatment to their patients. This manual includes over 60 stretches for the most common ailments including:

- Neck Pain
- Lower Back Pain
- Shoulder Pain
- and more.

