



To Your HEALTH



WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

STRETCHING YOUR WAY TO BETTER HEALTH

If your idea of stretching is to reach across the table for another chicken wing, think again. Stretching is a great way for everyone to prevent aches and pains and can also help prevent injuries from overuse and repetitive motions, which account for one-third of all missed workdays. So what do you need to know about stretching? Remember the four basics—how to start, how to stretch, how often, and how long.

How Do I Start?

Warming up can help your stretching results. A light warm-up before stretching can help increase your range of motion, but will not prevent injury. Try jumping jacks or walking in place to get the muscles active and warm.

How Should I Stretch?

Slow and controlled—not fast—and avoid bouncing. Also, it's best to hold the stretch continuously for 15 to 30 seconds. If you feel any pain, back off. Pain is your body's way of telling you that you have gone beyond your limits.

How Often?

One stretch per muscle group, once a day should be sufficient. However, some muscle groups may require more stretching.

How Long?

For 15 to 30 seconds. Research shows that this is effective for both immediate and long-term results. These recommendations are for healthy individuals. If you are injured or have other health conditions, be sure to consult your physician before starting a routine.

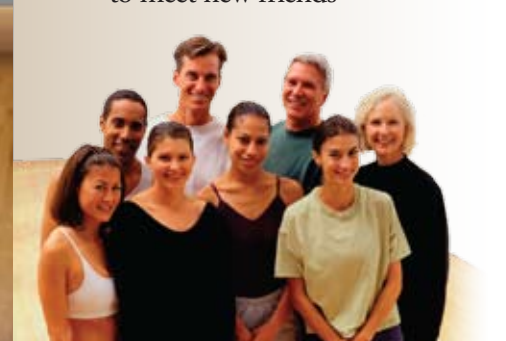
Source: Physicians and Sportsmedicine

Benefits Of Regular Physical Activity

These are the benefits often experienced by people who get regular physical activity.

Physical activity:

- ✓ gives you more energy
- ✓ helps in coping with stress
- ✓ improves your self-image
- ✓ increases resistance to fatigue
- ✓ helps counter anxiety and depression
- ✓ helps you to relax and feel less tense
- ✓ improves the ability to fall asleep quickly and sleep well
- ✓ provides an easy way to share an activity with friends or family and an opportunity to meet new friends



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Recommended Prevention & Screenings for your Long-Term Health

- 1** Start with lifestyle: eat a balanced diet and monitor your weight; don't smoke; exercise; limit alcohol and other drug use, and manage stress.
- 2** See your health care provider as close to age 40 as possible to get a comprehensive physical. This establishes your baseline screening results for future comparisons.
- 3** Monitor your body every month; really look at yourself and notice changes in skin, moles, or anything that seems to be changing.
- 4** Women should get annual gynecological examinations and mammography's and practice self breast examination (age appropriate).
- 5** Men should have routine prostate exams and examine their testicles monthly. A PSA test is recommended as part of standard medical screenings for men (age appropriate).
- 6** Both men and women should have a colonoscopy by age 50 to detect any possibility of colon cancer. Annual fecal occult blood stool testing is recommended.
- 7** Women should be screened after 50 for osteoporosis/osteopenia (calcium loss in bone).
- 8** Men and women should see their Dentist twice per year.
- 9** After 50, both men and women should have their hearing and vision checked regularly.
- 10** Both men and women should be immunized against pneumonia and influenza.

Prevention & Screening for Long-Term Health

As you age, your body reminds you almost daily that something doesn't seem "quite right." By paying attention to your body's language of pain, or uneasiness, you can become your own "health care" specialist. You can learn your body's signals, guiding you to focus on prevention. As you become more comfortable with being your own health care manager, you may initiate more aggressive early detection of problems through other screening and the use of traditional and complementary interventions.

Your primary prevention management activities should include healthy choices; eating a well balanced diet, exercising, not smoking, limiting use of alcohol and other drugs, and managing your stress. You also need to practice regular self care (secondary prevention) by paying attention to these possible bodily changes and doing the following self examinations: self breast exams, testicular exams, skin changes, shortness of breath, irregular heart beats, changes in bowel or bladder habits; and any other noticeable change in your body function that does not go back to normal in a few weeks. When you find something unusual, seek medical care.

Screening for Early Detection

Health Risk Appraisals (secondary prevention) at work can uncover health problems that need further analysis and referral. Your Doctor can perform, or order, a variety of screening tests aimed at early detection (secondary prevention) of problems. Common health problem indicators include: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high triglycerides, high blood sugar, rectal bleeding, mammography, cervical abnormalities, C-reactive protein, and vision and hearing function. Your Doctor may suggest other tests, depending on your age, gender, and medical history. By actively monitoring your health, receiving early screening and diagnosis, and following treatment recommendations, you will increase your chances for a robust, full life.

