



WOMEN'S HEART FOUNDATION

Stretching Exercises



***Improve range of motion,
coordination and joint flexibility***

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WARM-UPS, consisting of stretching and flexibility exercises should be performed for a minimum of 5-7 minutes before aerobic exercise.

The purpose of warm-ups includes: keeping muscles supple, increasing range of motion of joints, enhancing flexibility, improving coordination, increasing body temperature and heart rate, increasing blood flow to muscles and preventing injuries.

The right way to stretch is slow and relaxed. **DO NOT BOUNCE**. This can actually cause you to pull the muscle you are trying to stretch.

You should stretch to the point of "MILD TENSION". If you overstretch you will also cause damage. Back off if the stretch feels painful.

Hold the stretch for a minimum of 15 seconds each, without bouncing. **BREATHE** slowly and naturally. Do not hold your breathe while stretching. Relax the stretch. Stretch one or two more times with each stretch. Try to stretch a little further with each stretch. Again, only to the point of mild tension.

COOL-DOWNS, consisting of slow walking and stretching, are performed after aerobic exercise for a duration of 5-7 minutes. The purpose of cool-downs is to gradually return your heart rate and blood pressure to resting or pre-exercise levels.

Stretches for side of neck

- Sit or stand with arms hanging loosely at sides
- Turn head to one side, then the other
- Hold for 5 seconds, each side
- Repeat 1 to 3 times



Stretches side of neck

- Sit or stand with arms hanging loosely at sides
- Tilt head sideways, first one side then the other
- Hold for 5 seconds
- Repeat 1-3 times



Stretches back of neck

- Sit or stand with arms hanging loosely at sides
- Gently tilt head forward to stretch back of neck
- Hold 5 seconds
- Repeat 1-3 times



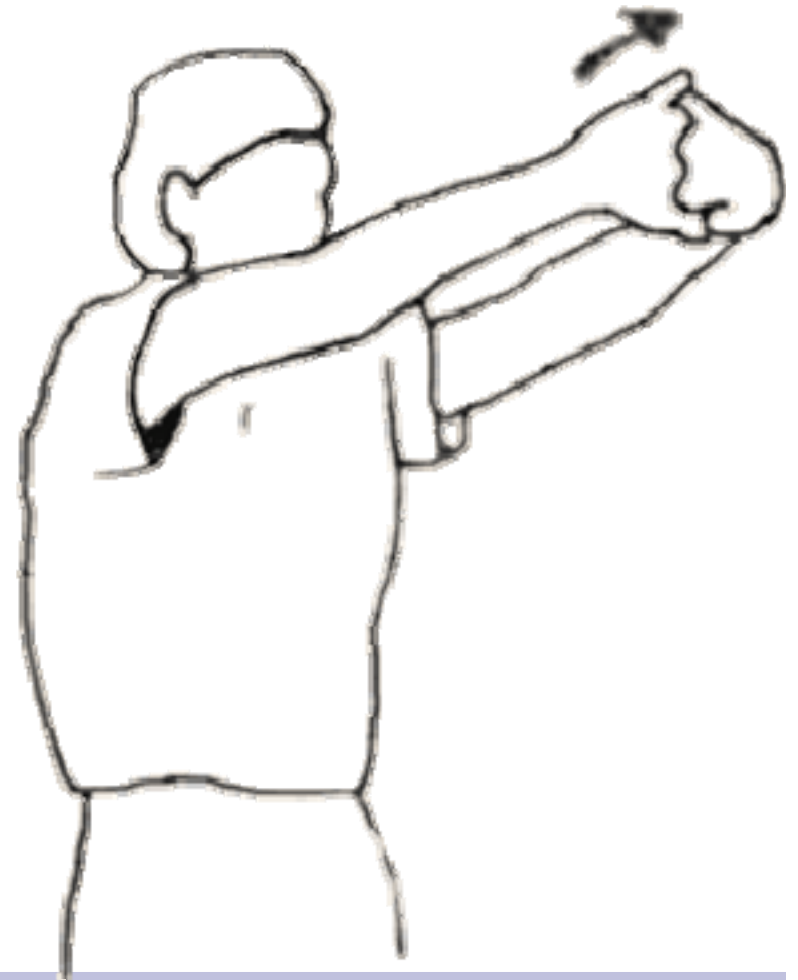
Stretches side of shoulder and back of upper arm

- Stand or sit and place right hand on left shoulder
- With left hand, pull right elbow across chest toward left shoulder and hold 10 to 15 seconds
- Repeat on other side



Stretches shoulder, middle back, arms, hands, fingers, wrist

- Interlace fingers and turn palms out
- Extend arms in front at shoulder height
- Hold 10 to 20 seconds, relax, and repeat



Stretches triceps, top of shoulders, waist

- Keep knees slightly flexed
- Stand or sit with arms overhead
- Hold elbow with hand of opposite arm
- Pull elbow behind head gently as you slowly lean to side until mild stretch is felt
- Hold 10 to 15 sec
- Repeat on other side



Stretches middle back

- Stand with hands on hips
- Gently twist torso at waist until stretch is felt
- Hold 10 to 15 sec
- Repeat on other side
- Keep knees slightly flexed



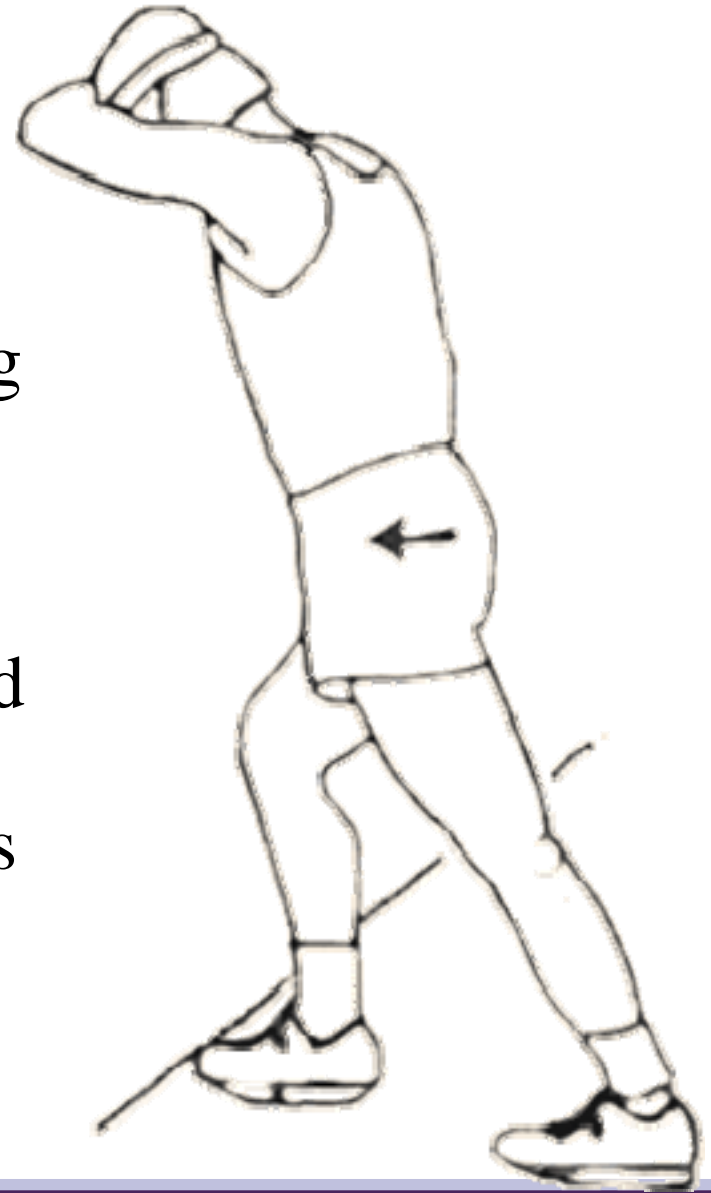
Stretches ankles

- Stand and hold onto something for balance
- Lift right foot and rotate foot and ankle 8 to 10 times clockwise, then 8 to 10 times counterclockwise.
- Repeat on other side (Note: can also be done sitting)



Stretches calf

- Stand a little way from wall and lean on it with forearms, head resting on hands
- Place right foot in front of you, leg bent, left leg straight behind you
- Slowly move hips forward until you feel stretch in calf of left leg
- Keep left heel flat and toes pointed straight ahead
- Hold easy stretch 10 to 20 seconds
- Do not bounce
- Repeat on other side
- Do not hold breath



Stretches front on thigh (quadriceps)

- Stand a little a way from wall and place left hand on wall for support
- Standing straight, grasp top of left foot with right hand
- Pull heel toward buttock
- hold 10 to 20 sec
- Repeat on other side



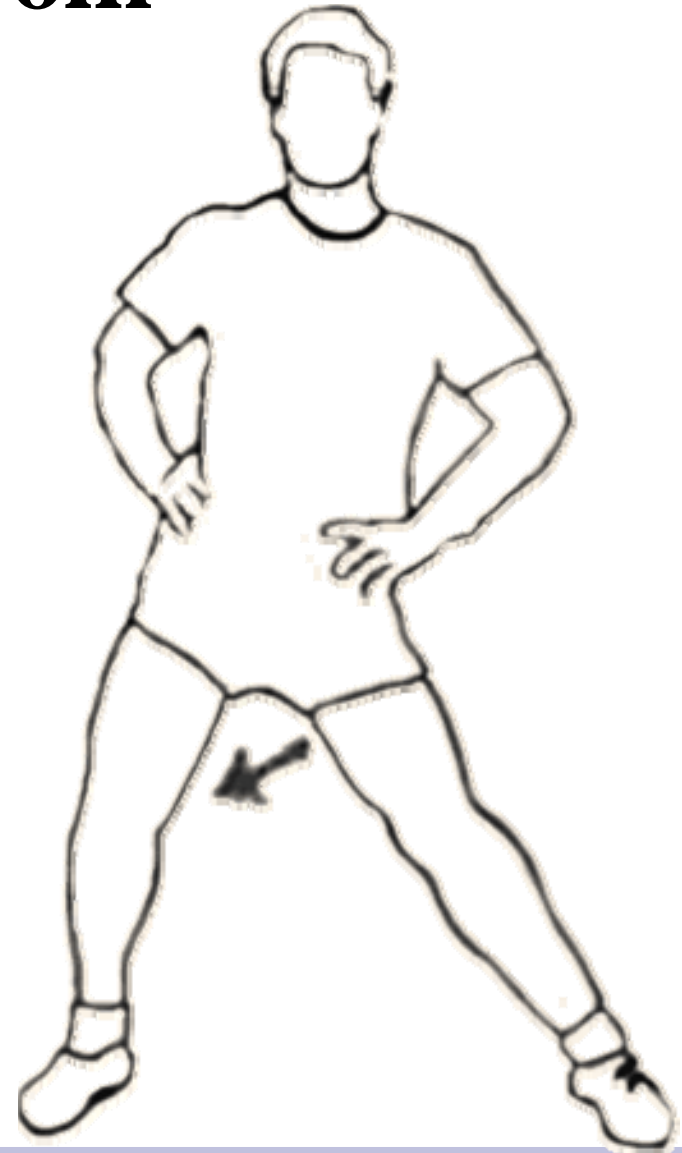
Relaxes hamstrings, stretches calves, Achilles, and ankles

- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart
- Keep heels flat, toes pointed straight ahead
- Assume bent knee position (quarter squat)
- Hold 30 sec



Stretches inner thigh, groin

- Stand with feet pointed straight ahead, a little more than shoulder-width apart
- Bend right knee slightly and move left hip downward toward right knee
- Hold 10 to 15 seconds
- Repeat on other side
- If necessary, hold on to something (chair, etc.) for balance



Stretches side of hip, hamstrings

- Sit on floor with right leg straight out in front
- Bend left leg, cross left foot over, place outside right knee
- Pull left knee across body toward opposite shoulder
- Hold 10 to 20 seconds
- Repeat on other side
- Breathe easily



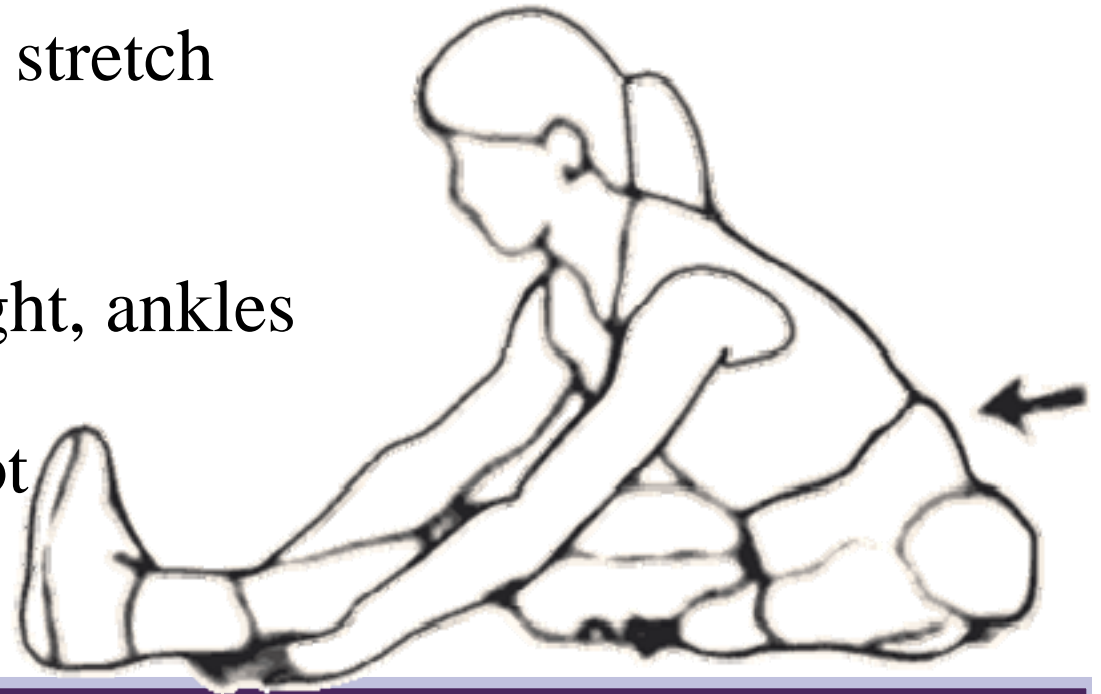
Stretches lower back, side of hip, & neck

- Sit on floor with left leg straight out in front
- Bend right leg, cross right foot over, place outside left knee
- Bend left elbow and rest it outside right knee
- Place right hand behind hips on floor
- Turn head over right shoulder, rotate upper body right
- Hold 10 to 15 seconds
- Repeat on other side
- Breathe in slowly



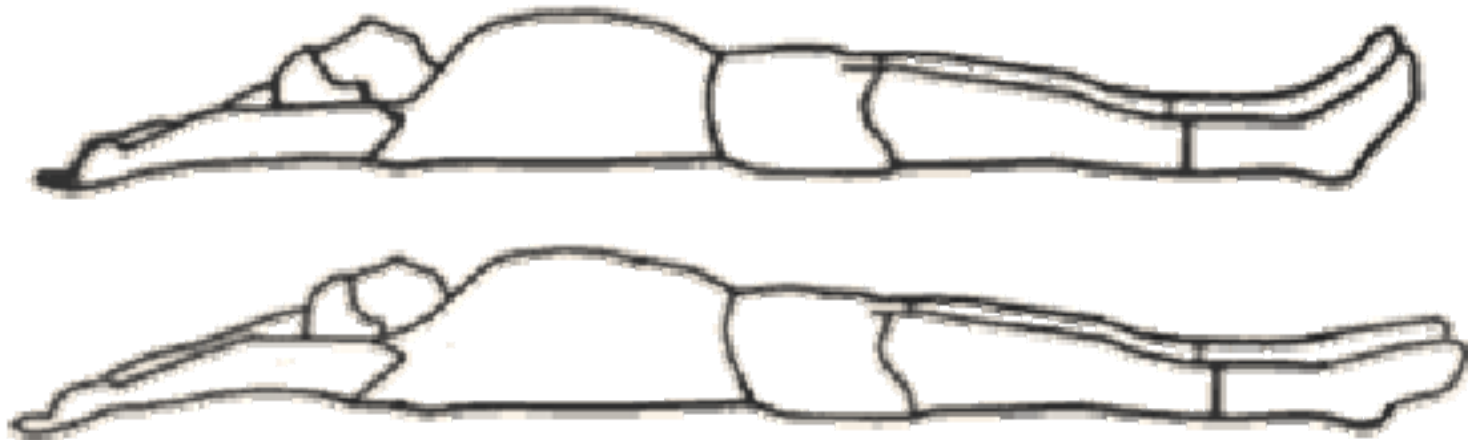
Stretches back of leg and lower back

- Sit on floor, legs straight out at sides
- Bend left leg in at knee
- Slowly bend forward from hips toward foot of straight leg until you feel slight stretch
- Do no dip head forward at start of stretch
- Hold this developmental stretch 10 to 20 seconds
- Repeat on other side
- Foot of straight leg upright, ankles and toes relaxed
- Use a towel if you cannot easily reach your feet



Stretches shoulders, arms, hands, feet and ankles

- Lie on floor, extend arms overhead, keep legs straight
- Reach arms and legs in opposite directions
- Stretch 5 sec, relax





WOMEN'S HEART FOUNDATION

improving survival and quality of life

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OUR MISSION

The Women's Heart Foundation is an international coalition of nurse executives, civic leaders, community health directors, member hospitals, partners, providers and corporate sponsors responding to the health crisis of women's heart disease by implementing an integrated model that promotes wellness, early intervention and excellence of care of women.

Demonstration Projects

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WHAT'S NEW

- Heart Failure News - updates from Heart Center online
- Best Hospitals 2006 - U.S. News and World Report

SAVE THE DATE

Feb 3, 2007 - WHF's 2nd Annual Women's Heart Luncheon and Wear Red -NJ Day is at the Trenton War Memorial.
[Click here](#) to download flyer.

May 5, 2007 - WHF's 4th Annual RUN FOR YOUR HEART event (tentative) at Mercer County Park



Women's Heart Foundation

a foundation of wellness and prevention
www.WomensHeart.org

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