

The importance of staying limber as you get older



Men are often more concerned about strength over being limber, but as we age, it's important to stay limber.

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As limber as a baby! I'm sure we would all like to be as limber as possible, but stretching is the one thing most people do not do. I've been there plenty of times. You get to the gym, workout for an hour or so, and then skip the stretching with promises to do it at home, which never happens. As you get older, our bodies need longer to recover. If your muscles are tight and sore, then your body has to deal with fixing that before you can fully recover. [Stretching](#) will help keep you living healthy and active well into your eighties and nineties.

Benefits of stretching daily

When you wake up in the morning, what do you do?

You stretch to wake up. This alerts the body to wake up and get moving. Just like your PE teacher drilled into your head, stretching is important, and this is even truer as you get older. [Aches and pains increase](#) and the best way to defeat that is by stretching. Not only will it decrease the daily aches and pains we feel, but you will also have more range of motion, better balance, more energy, and even help lower blood pressure, which will all lead to a better Quality Of Life.

Morning stretching

In the [morning](#), you feel tired and sluggish until you get moving a little bit. Do these seven simple stretches after you wake up to feel energetic and get your body and mind ready for the day:

Calf stretch - This stretch will help relieve foot, hip, shin, and knee pain, as well as strengthen the Achilles tendon. With feet firmly planted on the ground, place your hands shoulder-width apart on a wall or chair and lean forward.

Be sure to keep your heels on the ground as you lean forward.

Quadriceps stretch - Stretching out the quads will help relieve stress, improve blood flow to help hungry muscles heal, and reduce back and knee pain. With feet together, bend your leg back, grabbing your foot with your hand until you feel it in your quad.

Shoulder stretch - The shoulder joints are one of the most delicate in the body. Stretching your shoulders will help with flexibility and mobility. Standing shoulder-width apart, raise one arm to shoulder height and move it across the front of your body, pulling with your left arm.

Triceps stretch - Small, but important, stretching your triceps will help support your shoulders and biceps. Raise your arm above your head and bend at the elbow toward the opposite shoulder.

With your other hand, pull back on the elbow.

Runner's stretch - Even if you think running should only be used when trying to escape hungry bears, you should still add this one to your routine. It's great for relieving hip and knee pain. While sitting, bend one leg under you while the other leg is stretched out. Lean forward with arms extended and reach for your foot. Try to inch forward a little each time until you can touch your toes.

Butterfly stretch - This simple stretch will help open up your hips for better movement and flexibility. While sitting down, bend both legs until your heels are aligned and touching. Push your feet towards you until you feel it.

Standing side stretch - This is one of my favorite stretches as it hits all the good spots.

Great for your spine, lower back, and core, this stretch will also help with digestion. Standing with feet together raise one arm above your head and grab your raised arm, pulling it over your head and lean to the side. You will feel this in your neck and ribs.

Each stretch should be done three to five times for thirty seconds each.

Evening stretching

At the end of the day, you're tired and just want to go to bed. I suggest you take some time beforehand and do these six stretches that will improve your sleep and have you energized for the next day.

Standing forward fold - This stretch is good for your neck and back. By leaning forward, you are increasing blood flow back to your head. Try swaying back and forth a little to relieve tension in your legs and hips.

If you cannot bend all the way down, don't worry, the more you do this, the closer you will get to touch those toes. A good basic stretch to start off with. Stand with legs slightly apart and lean forwards from the hip. Try to bend as far as you can, reaching for the floor and holding for fifteen seconds, then release. Try stretching a little further each time.

Lizard pose - If you're sitting in front of a computer all day, this stretch is for you. This will work your hip flexors, hamstrings, and quadriceps. This is a more advanced stretch or pose, so ease into this one. With one leg in front, bend the knee with your other leg stretched out behind you. Place both hands in front of you and lean down and forward.

Hold for fifteen seconds, then release, moving a little further down and forward the next time.

Up the wall - If you are on your feet all day, this pose will help relieve tired feet and legs, decreasing inflammation as blood flows back up towards the heart. Sit down next to a wall facing it with your buttocks close to the wall. Lay down flat, arms to the side, and raise your legs up the wall, moving your buttocks closer to the wall as much as you can. Hold for 15 seconds, then try again, moving a little closer to the wall. Be sure to try and keep your legs straight.

Seated forward fold - This leg stretching move is just that, stretching all of the legs muscles from hip to toes. The further you bend forward, the more you'll feel it.

It will take a while to be able to lie flat, but practice makes perfect. While sitting down, legs together, lean forward as far as you can reaching for your toes, and hold for fifteen seconds. You'll find with a little effort, you can inch closer to your goal.

Figure four - This is another get stretch for your quads. Your legs do the most work, so make sure to take care of them the most. Lying on your back, raise one leg into the air while crossing the other leg in front. Pull the other leg towards your chest and hold.

Corpse pose - All you have to do on this one is climb into bed, lay flat, close your eyes, and breathe. Let all of the stress of the day go and drift off into a deep sleep. Lay in bed on your back with arms to the side and legs slightly apart and stretched forward.

Close your eyes and breath deep, holding each breath for ten to fifteen seconds before exhaling.

Our schedules will get in the way sometimes and it can be tough to get back into a routine once you stop. They say it takes three weeks for our bodies to get used to a routine, so stick with it for a month and see how much your quality of life improves. The more you do, the easier it will become. And as you advance, feel free to take on more advanced stretching or even start going to a yoga class. If you think the benefits or basic stretching is going to do wonders, you'll be amazed at how beneficial yoga is.

