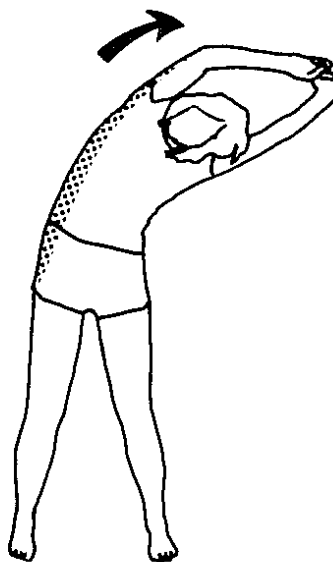
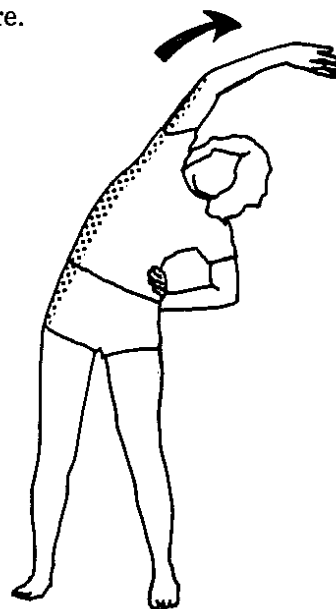


STANDING STRETCHES FOR THE UPPER BODY

These next stretches are excellent for trimming the waistline. They will stretch the muscles along your side from your arm to your hips. They are done standing up, and you can do them any time, and anywhere.

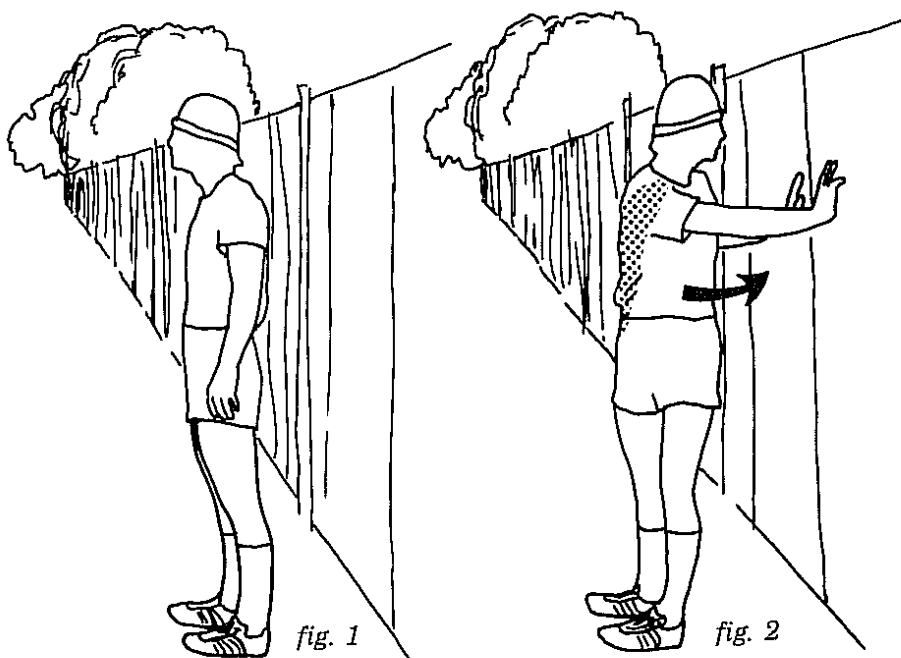
Stand with your feet about shoulder-width apart and toes pointed straight ahead. Keeping your knees slightly bent (1 inch), place one hand on your hip for support while you extend your other arm up and over your head. Now slowly bend at your waist to the side, toward the hand on your hip. Move slowly; feel a good stretch. Hold and relax. Gradually increase the amount of time you are able to hold the stretch (easy stretch for 10-15 seconds). Always come out of a stretch slowly and under control. No quick or jerky movements.



Instead of using your hand on your hip for support, extend both arms overhead. Grasp your right hand with your left hand and bend slowly to the left, using your left arm to gently pull the right arm over the head and down toward the ground.

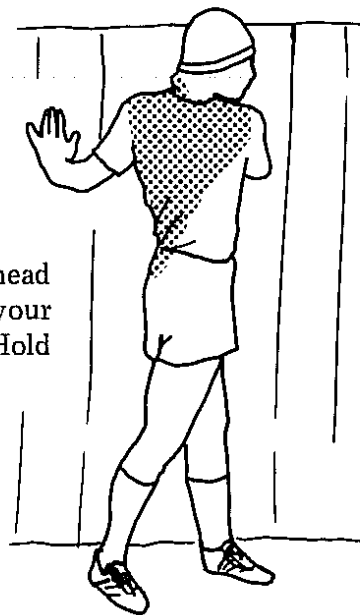
By using one arm to pull the other you can increase the stretch along your sides and along the spine. *Do not overstretch.* Hold an easy stretch for 8-10 seconds.

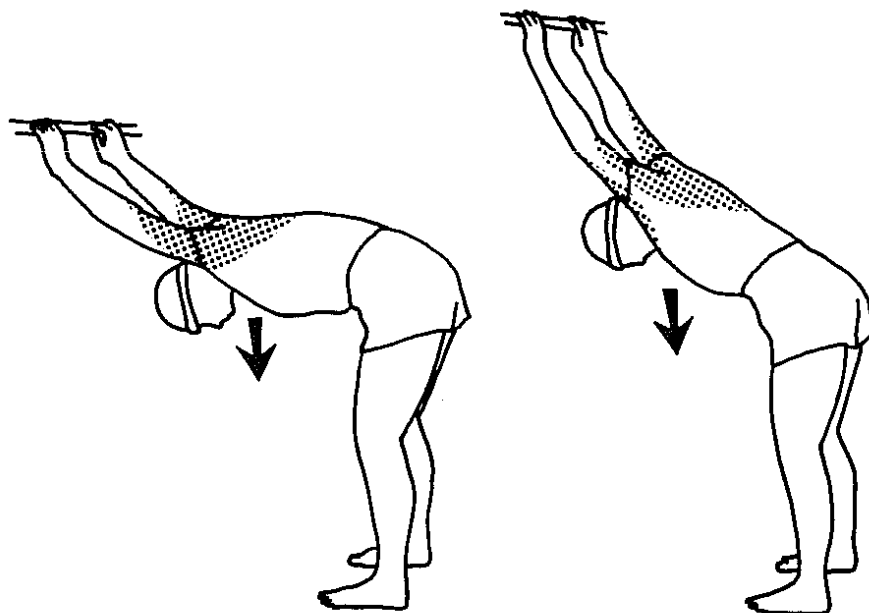
This stretch for the upper body stretches the muscles laterally along the spine.



Stand about 12-24 inches away from a fence or wall with your back towards it (fig. 1). With your feet about shoulder-width apart and toes pointed straight ahead, slowly turn your upper body around until you can easily place your hands on the fence or wall at about shoulder height (fig. 2). Turn in one direction and touch the wall, return to the starting position, and then turn in the opposite direction and touch the wall. Do not force yourself to turn any farther than is fairly comfortable. If you have a knee problem, do this stretch very slowly and cautiously. Be relaxed and do not force. Hold for 10-20 seconds. Gradually increase the length of time you hold this stretch. Keep knees slightly bent (1 inch).

Variation: To change the stretch, turn your head and look over your right shoulder. Try to keep your hips facing forward and parallel to the fence. Hold an easy stretch for 10 seconds. Do both sides.

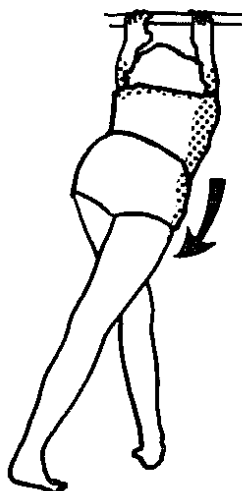




Another good upper body and back stretch is to place both hands shoulder-width apart on a fence or ledge and let your upper body drop down as you keep your knees slightly bent (1 inch). (Always bend your knees when coming out of this stretch.) Your hips should be directly above your feet.

Now, bend your knees just a bit more and feel the stretch change. Place your hands at different heights and change the area of the stretch. After you become familiar with this stretch it is possible to really stretch the spine. Great to do if you have been slumping in the upper back and shoulders all day. This will take some of the kinks out of a tired upper back. Find a stretch that you can hold for at least 30 seconds.

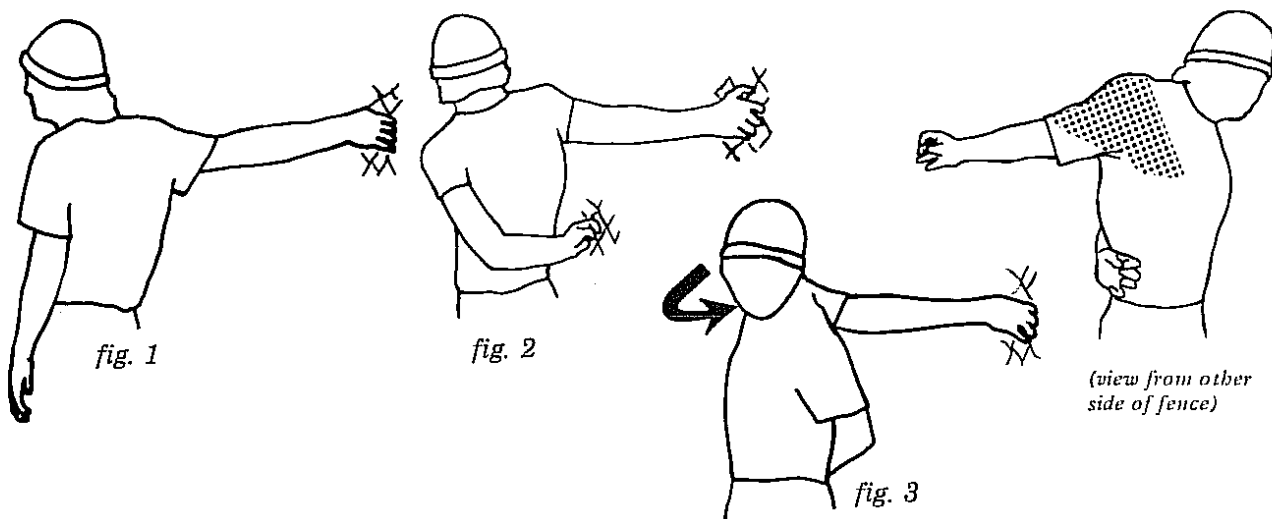
The top of the refrigerator or a file cabinet are good to use for this stretch. Do it slowly. It can be done practically anywhere; all it takes is a little thought and some doing.



To increase and change the area of the stretch in another way, bring one leg behind and across the midline of your body as you lean in the opposite direction. This will stretch those hard-to-reach areas of the upper body.

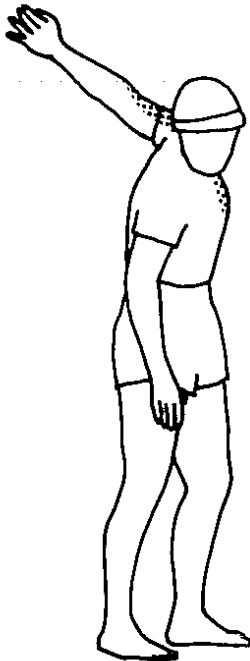
I find these arm and shoulder stretches to be very good before and after running. They allow for a relaxed upper body and a freer arm swing. They are

also good to do during weight-lifting workouts or as a warm-up for any upper body activity such as tennis, baseball, handball, etc.



This stretch is for the front of the shoulders and arms. You need a chain-linked fence, doorway, or wall. Face the fence and hold onto it (or press against it) with your right hand at shoulder level (fig. 1). Next, bring your other arm around your back and grab the fence (or whatever you are using) as in fig. 2. Now, look over your left shoulder in the direction of your right hand. Keep your shoulder close to the fence as you slowly turn your head (fig. 3). Trying to look at your right hand behind you gives you a stretch in the front of the shoulders.

Stretch the other side. Do it slowly and under control. The feeling of a good stretch is what is important: *not how far you can stretch.*



Variation: From the previous position, stretch your arm and shoulder at various angles. Each angle will stretch the arm and shoulder differently. Hold for 10 seconds.

Here is another stretch you can do while using a chain-linked fence or wall for support and balance.

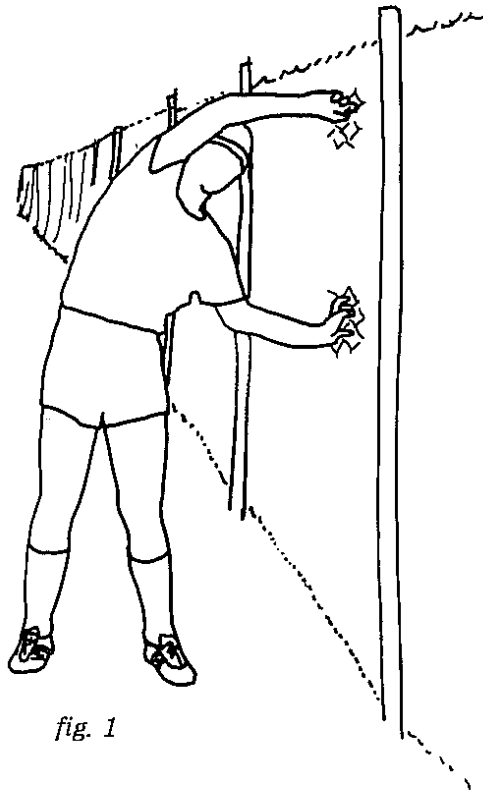


fig. 1

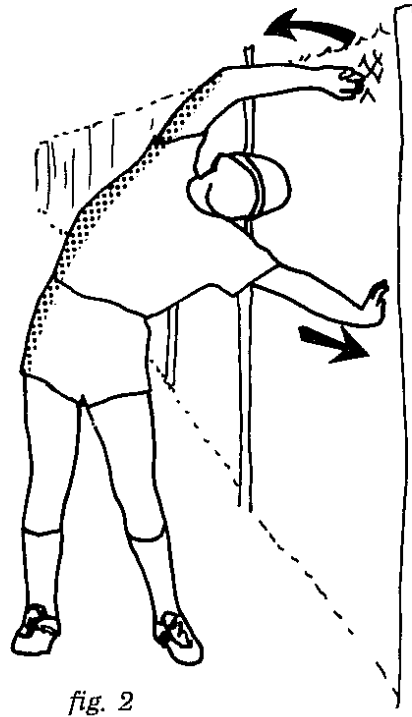


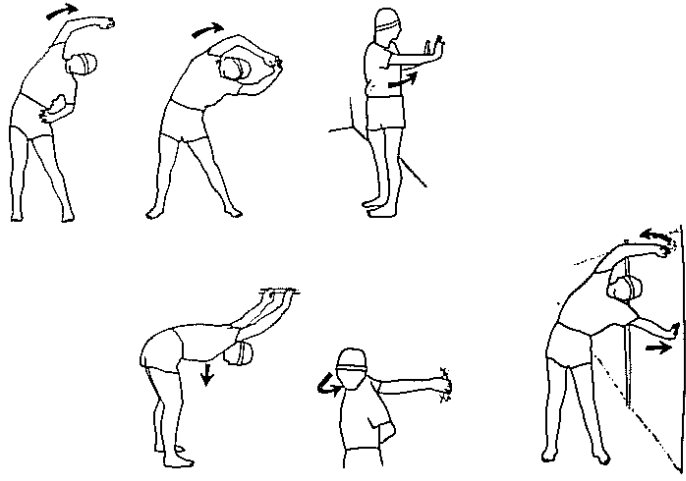
fig. 2

Hold on to the fence about waist-high with your left hand. Now reach over your head with your right arm and grab the fence with your right hand. Your left arm will be slightly bent with the right arm extended (fig. 1). Keep knees slightly bent (1 inch).

To stretch your waistline and sides, straighten your left arm and pull over with your (upper) right arm (fig. 2). Hold for 10 seconds. Do both sides.

Slowly go into each stretch and slowly come out of each stretch. Do not bob, jerk, or bounce. Keep your stretching fluid and under control.

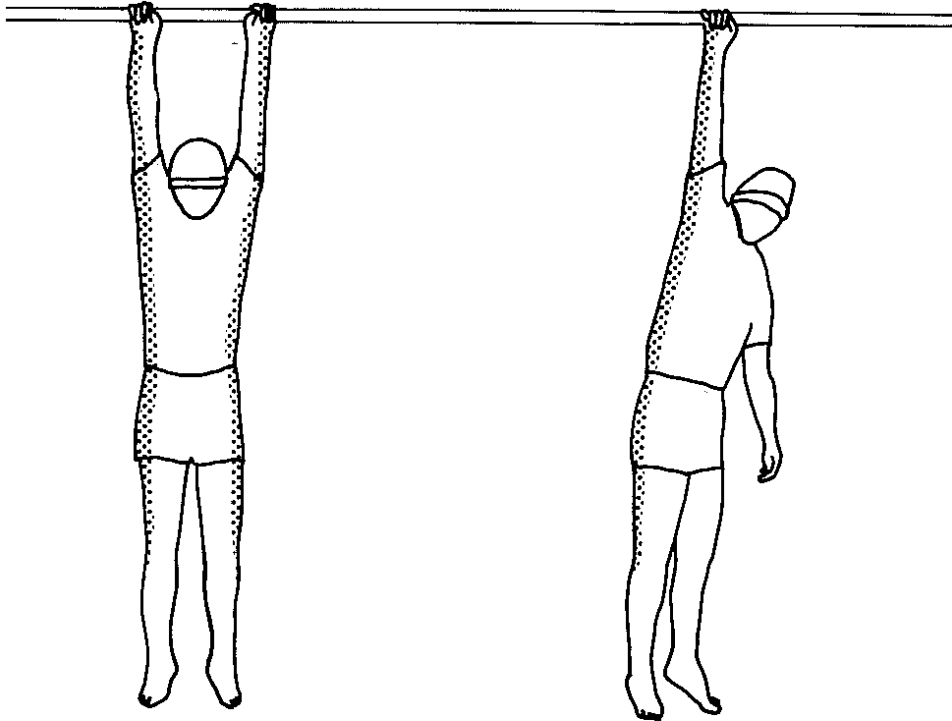
SUMMARY



Enjoy stretching by the way it feels. If you torture yourself with drastic tensions because you think you should be flexible, you deprive yourself of the true benefits of stretching. If you stretch correctly, you'll find the more you stretch, the easier it becomes, and the easier you stretch, the more you will naturally enjoy it.

STRETCHING ON A CHIN BAR

With the help of gravity, it is possible to get a fine stretch on a chin bar.



Hold on to the bar with both hands, relax your chin forward as you hang with feet off the ground. A great stretch for the back. Begin holding for 10 seconds, gradually increasing to at least 60 seconds. A strong grip will make this stretch easier.

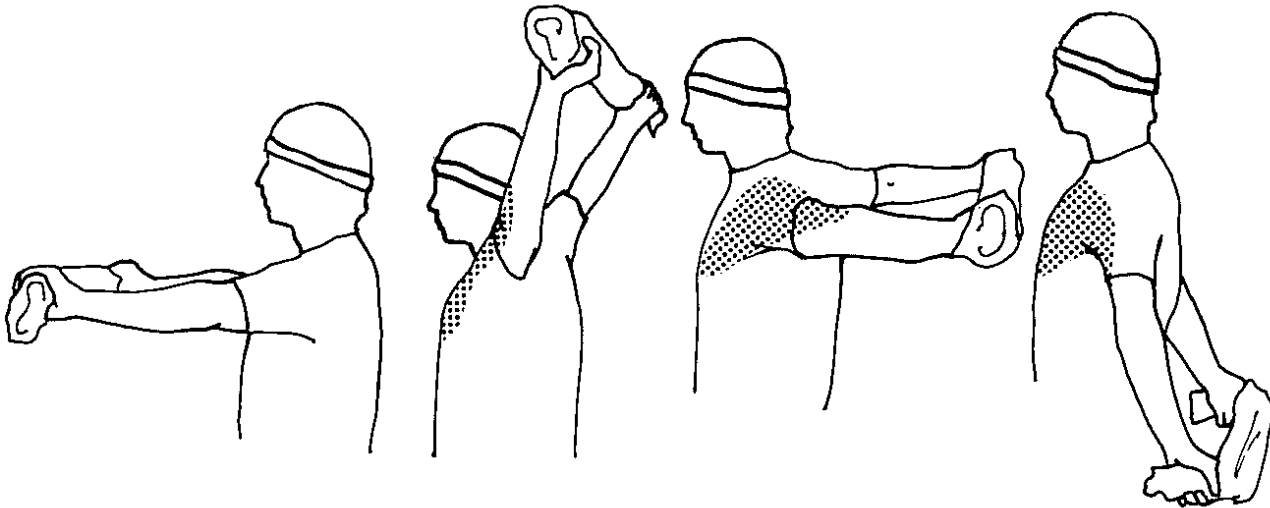
Release one hand and hang by only one hand. This will stretch the shoulder, ribs, and side of upper back. Hold and relax. Again, be gradual in your approach. Begin holding this stretch for 5 seconds. Do not hang too long at the beginning. This is a good stretch if you let yourself relax.

Caution: *Do not attempt this stretch if you have or have had an injury in the shoulder area.*

STRETCHES FOR THE UPPER BODY USING A TOWEL

Most of us have a towel in our hands at least once a day. A towel can aid in stretching the arms, shoulders, and chest.

Grab the towel near both ends so that you can move it, with straight arms, up and over your head and down behind your back. Do not strain or force it. Your hands should be far enough apart to allow for relatively free movement up and over your head and down behind your back.

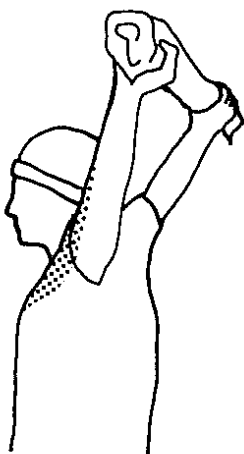


To increase the stretch, move your hands slightly closer together and, keeping the arms straight, repeat the movement. Go slowly and feel the stretch. Do not overstretch. If you are unable to go through the full movement of up, over, and behind while keeping your arms straight, then your hands are too close together. Move them farther apart.

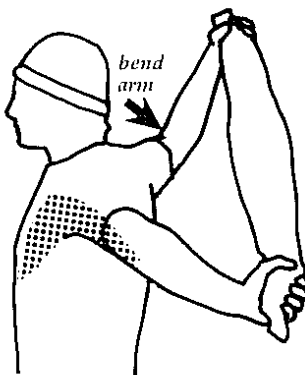
You can hold the stretch at any place during this movement. This will isolate and add further stretch to the muscles of that particular area. For example: if your chest is tight and sore, it is possible to isolate the stretch there by holding the towel at shoulder level with arms straight behind you, as shown above. Hold for 10-20 seconds.

Stretching is not a contest. You needn't compare yourself with others, because we are all different. Moreover, each day we are different: some days we are more limber than others. Stretch comfortably, within *your* limits, and you will begin to feel the flow of energy that comes from proper stretching.

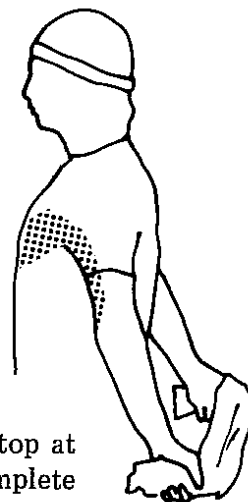
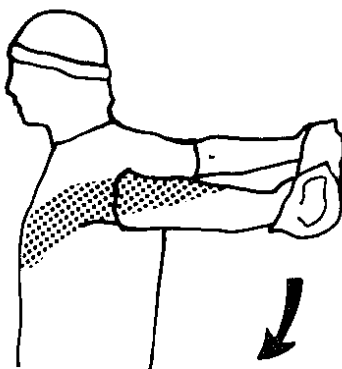
Another series of stretches using a towel is to bring the towel overhead, keeping your arms straight.



At this point lower the left arm back and behind you at shoulder level as your right arm bends to approximately a 90° angle.



Now straighten the right arm out to the same level as the left arm and then simultaneously move both arms to continue the downward movement.



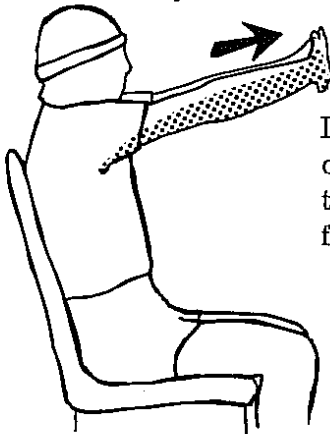
This can be done slowly, in one complete movement, or you can stop at any point to increase the stretch in that particular area. Do this complete movement toward the other side by lowering your right arm first.

As you become more flexible you will be able to hold the towel with your hands closer together. But again, do not strain.

I think that limberness in the shoulders and arms really helps tennis, running, walking, and of course swimming (to name only a few activities where you need this flexibility). Stretching the chest area reduces muscle tension and tightness and increases circulation. It is actually very simple to stretch and keep the upper body limber, if you do it *regularly*.

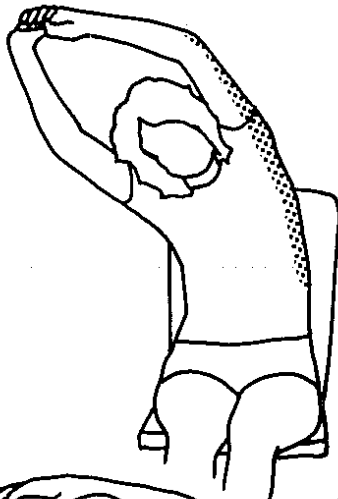
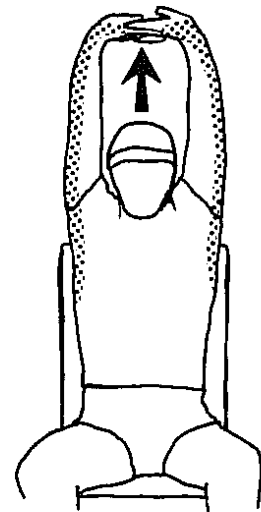
SITTING STRETCHES

Here is a series of stretches you can do while sitting. They are good for people who work at office jobs. You can relieve tension and energize parts of your body that have become stiff from sitting.

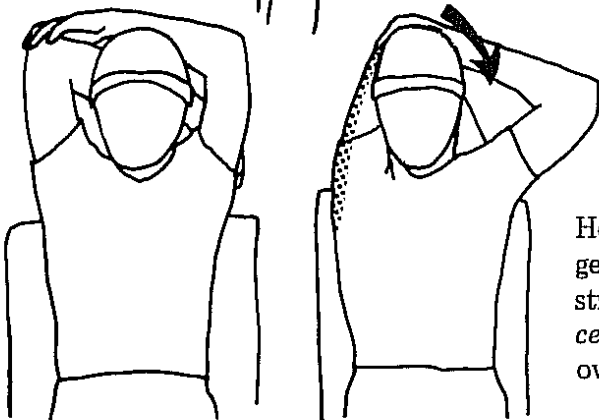


Interlace your fingers, then straighten your arms out in front of you with palms facing out. Feel the stretch in arms and through upper part of back (shoulder blades). Hold stretch for 20 seconds. Do at least twice.

Interlace fingers, then turn palms upward above your head as you straighten your arms. Think of elongating your arms as you feel a stretch through your arms and upper sides of rib cage. Hold only a stretch that feels good. Do three times. Hold for 10 seconds.

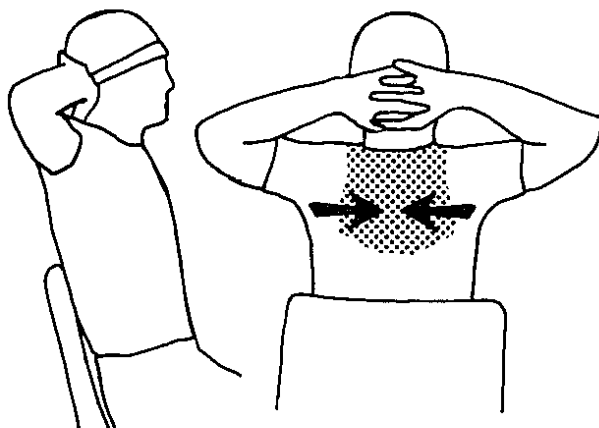


With arms extended overhead, hold on to the outside of your left hand with right hand and pull your left arm to the side. Keep arms as straight as comfortably possible. This will stretch the arm and side of body and shoulder. Hold for 15 seconds. Do both sides.

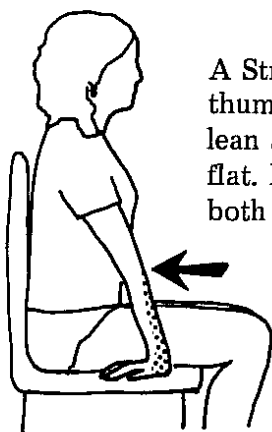
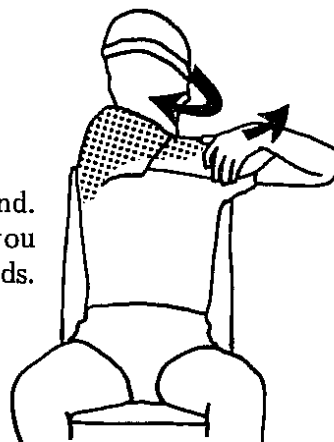


Hold your right elbow with your left hand, then gently pull elbow behind head until an easy tension-stretch is felt in shoulder or back of upper arm (*triceps*). Hold an easy stretch for 30 seconds. Do not overstretch.

With your fingers interlaced behind your head, keep elbows straight out to side with your upper body in a good, aligned position. Now think of pulling your shoulder blades together to create a feeling of tension through upper back and shoulder blades. Hold feeling of releasing tension for 8-10 seconds, then relax. Do several times. This is good to do when shoulders and upper back are tense or tight.



Hold your right arm just above the elbow with your left hand. Now gently pull your elbow toward your left shoulder as you look over your right shoulder. Hold stretch for 10 seconds. Do both sides.

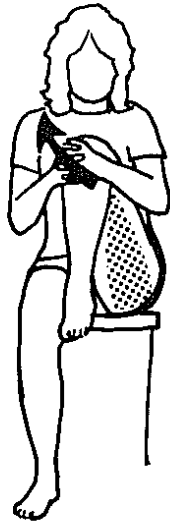


A Stretch for the Forearm: With the palm of your hand flat, thumb to the outside and fingers pointed backward, slowly lean arm back to stretch your forearm. Be sure to keep palms flat. Hold for 35-40 seconds. Do both sides. You can stretch both forearms at the same time, if you wish.

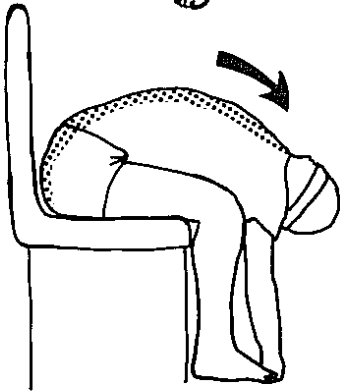
**Sitting Stretches for Ankles,
Side of Hip, and Lower Back:**

Rotate your ankles while sitting, clockwise and then counter-clockwise. Do one ankle at a time, 20-30 revolutions.



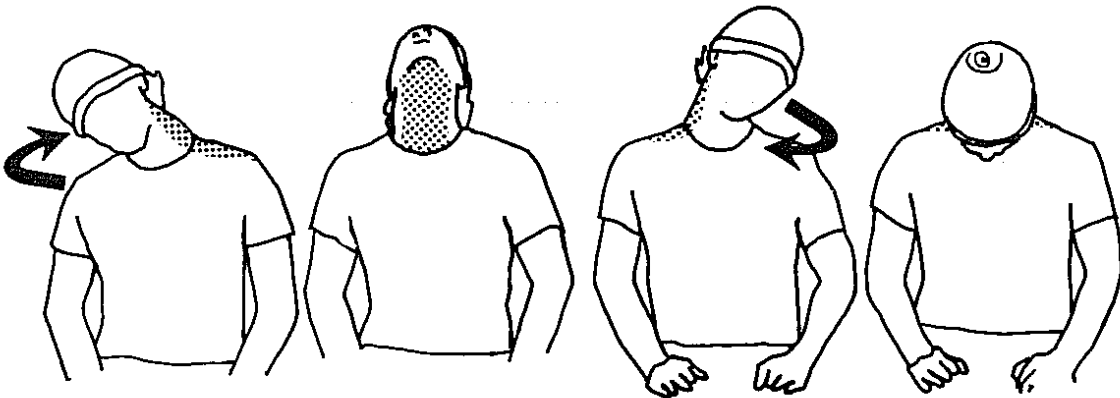


Hold on to your lower left leg just below the knee. Gently pull it toward your chest. To isolate a stretch in the side of your upper leg, use the left arm to pull the bent leg across and toward the opposite shoulder. Hold for 30 seconds at an easy stretch tension. Do both sides.



Lean forward to stretch and to take the pressure off your lower back. Even if you do not feel a stretch, it is still good for circulation. Hold for 45-50 seconds. Put your hands on your thighs to help push your body to an upright position.

Stretches for the Face and Neck:



Sit in a position that is comfortable. *Very slowly* roll your head around in a full circle as you keep your back straight. While you are rolling your head around slowly you may feel that you should stop and hold a stretch at a particular place that feels tight. Do so, but don't strain. If you are holding a position, be relaxed and the area will gradually loosen up.

These stretches for your neck will help you sit or stand with better posture when you find you are slouching. See page 183 on sitting.

This stretch may cause people around you to think you are very strange, indeed, but you often find a lot of tension in your face from frowning or squinting because of eye strain.



Raise your eyebrows and open your eyes as wide as possible. At the same time, open your mouth to stretch the muscles around your nose and chin and stick your tongue out. Hold this stretch 5-10 seconds. Getting the tension out of the muscles in your face will make you smile.

SUMMARY



If you don't have much uninterrupted time available, use short periods of stretching (five minutes) every three or four hours. This will help you to feel consistently good throughout the day.