# STRETCH & FLEX Program

# Stretching improves flexibility and mobility.

Stretch Smoothly: Bouncing during a stretch invites muscles to respond by tightening up to protect themselves. Begin slowly and smoothly. Work towards a position that starts to feel tight but never becomes painful.

**Pain is Not Good:** Feeling pain during a stretch is self-defeating. If you feel pain, you are working against the body's loosening-up mechanism. Always ease into your stretch; to do otherwise is to invite injury.

**Staying Loose:** As you stretch, it is important to keep your body relaxed. This can be accomplished by keeping your breathing even and consistent.

#### WARM-UP:

· 1 minute stationary walking.

### **DYNAMIC WARM-UP:**

· (repeat 10 times)

#### WRISTS:

· Move wrists up and down and rotate.

#### SHOULDERS:

· Alternate raising each arm overhead. Keep palms facing each other.

#### SIDE BEND:

· Reach up and over to the right or left, as you are reaching let your heel come off the ground (alternate).

#### TRUNK TWISTS:

· As you twist: lift heel, and go slowly side to side.

## **ARM CIRCLES:**

- · Start with arms raised.
- · Slowly rotate in small circles.
- · Gradually increase circle size while maintaining control.
- · Change direction.

#### **ANKLE CIRCLES:**

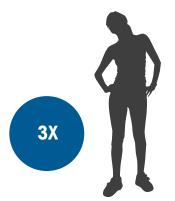
- · Stand on one foot.
- · Lift up other foot.
- · Rotate foot in small circles.
- Do clockwise and counterclockwise rotations.

Consult your physician before beginning any exercise program, or if you have any questions about your ability to perform any stretch.









## **NECK STRETCH**

- · Stand with feet shoulder width apart
- · Hands on hips
- Slowly and gently tilt left, front, right and back (3x)
- · Repeat other direction (3x)



# WRIST STRETCH

- · Gently pull palm up
- · Pull back of hand down
- · Hold each direction for 20 seconds



## SHOULDER STRETCH

- · Place one arm across chest
- Bend other arm and hold behind the elbow
- · Gently stretch for 20 seconds



# ABDOMINAL STRETCH

- Interlock fingers overhead with palms facing upward
- · Reach as high as you can
- Lean forward/backward slightly for 20 seconds



- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart
- Bend down, putting your hands on slightly bent knees
- Look up, pointing your chin at the ceiling and creating an arch in your back
- Take a deep breath. As you exhale, count to three; tuck your chin into your chest, and round your back (repeat 3 times)





## HAMSTRING STRETCH

- Stand up straight with your feet slightly apart
- Slightly bend your left leg, putting hands on your left thigh
- Extend your right leg, keeping your heel on the floor. Look straight ahead. Hold for 20 seconds and switch



# **QUAD STRETCH**

- Stand up straight with your feet slightly apart
- Extend your left arm or use a wall (neighbor) for balance
- Grab your right ankle with your right hand and pull up toward your back
   Your your back in good alignment with
- Keep your body in good alignment with your knees fairly close together

· Hold for 20 seconds and switch

REACH HIGH

• Stand up straight

- Stand up straight with your feet shoulder-width apart
- Stretch your arms up over your head as high as you can
- · Spread your fingers
- Take a deep breath, count to three and exhale (repeat 3 times) 20 seconds and switch