**Core Stretches**

**Warm up:**

* Warm up can include activities such as: walking around the room, stepping side to side, riding a bike for 5 minutes, or walking on the treadmill for 5 minutes.
* Stretch only warm muscles. Warm up first. Hold each stretch 30 – 60 seconds. Watch your back!

**Lower body stretches (standing):**

**Calf muscle**

**1**. Stand facing a wall or an exercise bar.

**2**. Move your right foot back, keeping your leg straight.

**3**. Move your left foot forward with the knee bent. Make sure your knee is in line with your ankle.

**4**. Press your heel of your right foot into the floor.

**5**. You should feel this stretch up the back of your lower leg, from your heel up to the back of your knee.

**6**. Repeat with the left leg back and right leg forward to stretch the calf muscle.



**Hamstring**

**1**. Stand facing a wall or an exercise bar.

**2**. Bring your right foot forward.

**3**. Bend both knees.

**4**. Place the heel of your right foot on the floor with your toes raised up to the ceiling. This knee should be only slightly bent.

**5**. Put your weight back by sticking your behind out.

**6**. You should feel this stretch up the back of your upper leg from the back of your knee up to your Gluteus Maximus (your behind).

**7.** Make sure that your hips are facing the wall. One hip should not be in front of or behind the other hip.

**8**. Repeat with the left leg forward to stretch the left hamstring.



**Quadriceps**

**1**. Stand facing a wall or an exercise bar.

**2**. Raise your right heel up in back toward your behind.

**3**. If possible, grab your right ankle with your right hand or grab slightly above your ankle and hold your leg up to your behind.

**4**. Make sure that your right leg is beside your left leg and not in front of it.

**5**. Make sure that your hips are facing the wall and the low back is not arched.

**6**. You should feel this stretch up the front of your upper leg (thigh) from your knee all the way up the front of your thigh.

**7**. Repeat with the left leg to stretch your left quadriceps grabbing your left leg with your left hand.

**Lower leg stretches (floor):**

**Hamstring and calf stretch**

**1**. Lie on the floor with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.

**2**. Your back should be pressed into the floor to protect your lower back.

**3**. Bring your right leg straight up into the air and try to straighten your leg.

**4**. If you straighten your leg and do not feel a stretch from the back of your knee up to your behind, grasp your leg behind the knee and pull it toward your body.

**5**. You must keep your leg as straight as possible to feel this stretch.

**6**. Relax your leg, but keep it in the air.

**7**. Point your toe then flatten out your foot and hold this position for 30 – 60 seconds. This position will give you a calf stretch.

**8**. Return your right foot to the floor keeping your knee bent and your back pressed to the floor.

**9**. Repeat this series of steps with your left leg to stretch your left hamstring and calf muscle.

**Quadriceps**

**1**. Lie flat on your stomach and bring your heel up to your behind.

**2**. Grab your ankle or slightly above your ankle and pull your heel to your behind.

**3**. If you are unable to reach your ankle, grab your pants leg or use a towel to wrap around your leg to pull your heel toward your behind.

**4**. **Do not** twist your back. Keep both of your hips on the floor.

**5**. Repeat with your left leg to stretch your left quadriceps.



**Upper body stretches (standing):**

**Side stretch and triceps stretch**

**1**. Stand facing a mirror.

**2**. Raise your right arm into the air and reach for the ceiling.

**3**. You should feel a good stretch all through your side.

**4**. Drop your hand behind your head reaching across the body toward the opposite shoulder blade.

**5.** Reach up with your other hand and gently pull your elbow toward your back.

**6**. If you cannot reach to pull your elbow back from behind your head, gently push your elbow back by placing your hand on the front of your arm and push back.

**7**. You should feel this stretch in the back of your upper arm (triceps).

**8**. Repeat with your left arm for a stretch in the left side and left triceps.



**Posterior deltoid (back of shoulder):**

**1**. Stand facing a mirror.

**2**. Extend your right arm out to the side, at shoulder height.

**3**. Bring your right arm across your chest.

**4**. Place your left hand on your right elbow or upper arm and pull your right arm close to your chest.

**5**. You should feel this stretch in the back of your shoulder (posterior deltoid).

**6**. Repeat with the left arm.

**Anterior deltoid (front of shoulder) and pectoralis major (chest):**

**1**. Stand facing a mirror.

**2**. Stand straight with your chest and head up.

**3**. Roll your shoulders back, opening up your chest.

**4**. Extend your arms back beyond your body.

**5**. If you can, clasp your fingers together behind your back and raise your arms up in the air behind your back.

**6**. **Do not** lean forward. Stay in a straight position.

**7**. You should feel this stretch in the front of your shoulder (anterior deltoid) and the front of your chest (pectoralis major).

**Neck**

**1**. Stand facing a mirror.

**2**. Press your chin into the chest. You should feel a stretch up the back of the neck.

**3**. Return to looking straight ahead.

**4**. Press your right ear to right shoulder.  **Don’t** raise your shoulder up to the ear.

**5.** Return to looking straight ahead.

**6**. Press your left ear to left shoulder. **Don’t** raise your shoulder up to the ear.

**7**. Return to looking straight ahead.

**8**. Turn your head to the right as far as you can for a good stretch.

**9**. Return to looking straight ahead.

**10**. Turn your head to the left as far as you can for a good stretch.

**11**. Return to looking straight ahead.



Adapted from https://patienteducation.osumc.edu/Documents/core-stretches.pdf