

WorkSmart Stretching Plan



ST. LUKE'S
IOWA HEALTH SYSTEM

For the life of Siouxland.

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WorkSmart Industrial Athlete Stretching Poster:

St. Luke's Health System "Industrial Athlete Program"

Frequent stretching and body movement is important to keep a proper blood supply to your working muscles and tissues throughout the workday to prevent fatigue, discomfort, and reduce your risks for MSD injuries. These stretches will also reduce your stress level, and increase your energy level throughout each workday. These should be done **two to three times per day, or up to every hour, as determined by your body's fatigue/ discomfort level.** Stretches should not be forced, and not cause any pain. Some discomfort is expected, but NO pain. Don't bounce at the end of any stretch as this significantly increases the risks for sprains/ strains. You may be sore for the first 2-4 weeks after beginning this daily stretching program. To help reduce this soreness drink 40+ ounces of water daily, do aerobic exercise such as walking or biking and stretch again to get rid of your bodies lactic acids which cause fatigue, discomfort and pain.

1a. Reach for the Sky Stand up tall and reach with both arms up to the sky (with one hand gripped around your opposite wrist) look straight up towards your hands. When your arms are fully extended hold for 3 to 5 seconds, then gently side bend your trunk to the L side (photo 1b) and hold for 3 to 5 seconds, then to the R side and hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Repeat **2** times. **Great stretch to reduce upper back/ neck and shoulder fatigue and stress.**

2a. Cat Back Stretch Stand and reach with both arms straight out in front of you at shoulder level (gently hold both hands together), arch your back forward and hold this position for 3 to 5 seconds. Now add rotation (photo 2b) towards your L side and hold for 3 to 5 seconds, then repeat on the R side. Repeat **1** times. **Great stretch to reduce upper back, neck and between shoulder blades fatigue/ stress and soreness.**

3. Standing Trunk Extension (Backward Bend) Standing up tall put your hands on your hips/ lower back and while looking straight ahead, gently bend backwards and hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Repeat **2 to 3** times. **One of the most important stretches to prevent lower back injury (keeping the discs in your lower back healthy), reduce fatigue and pain to the lower back.** Do frequently throughout the workday, **at least every hour if you sit for most of your workday.** A great tweak to this stretch is to look back and over your shoulder holding for 3 to 5 seconds, and do this towards the side of pain in your lower back/ hips/ buttock muscles.

4. Standing Trunk Sidebend Stand up tall and bend towards your L side reaching with your R hand overhead and hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Repeat other side, bending towards your R side with your L arm overhead and hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Repeat **1 to 2** times. **If you feel any pain in your lower back and/ or shoulder bring your arms down and place them on your hips.**

5. Standing Trunk Rotation Stand up tall and reach with your R hand over your L shoulder, twisting your body towards the L side. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Now reach with L hand over R shoulder twisting your body to the R and hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Repeat **2 to 3** times.

6. Chin Tuck Stand up tall as in military attention, keeping your chin tucked down (looking straight ahead) and hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Repeat **2 to 3** times. You can do this either with or without your hand as a guide. Don't push on your jaw as this can stress your TMJ joint. **Best stretch to get rid of your headaches!** You can tweak this stretch by adding extension and/ or looking over your shoulder towards the side of pain. Just bump into the pain and slowly back off...repeat until your headaches are gone!

7. Neck Stretch (3 Positions A, B, and C) Place your L hand on top of your R shoulder, gently pull down and tip your head towards your L shoulder while looking straight ahead **Photo A**, hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Repeat other side. **Photo B**- With L hand holding R shoulder down gently look down and over towards your L shoulder and hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Repeat other side. **Photo C**- With L hand holding R shoulder down tip your head towards your L shoulder and then gently look back over your R shoulder and/ or twist your head to the R side holding for 3 to 5 seconds. Repeat other side. Repeat **1** times. **This is a great stretch to do first thing in the morning in a warm shower to reduce neck/ shoulder stiffness. This stretch really helps to reduce your risks (or is a must in the treatment) of elbow, wrist and hand MSD/CTD problems too!**

8a. Wrist Stretch Hold R arm out in front of you at shoulder level (fully extended) with palm up. With your L hand gently pull your R fingers back (all fingers, except the thumb) to feel a good stretch to your R forearm (**See photo a**). Hold for 3 to 5 seconds, then pull your fingers across the front of your body (**photo b**) and hold for 3 to 5 seconds, lastly rotate your hand to the outside and hold for 3 to 5 seconds (**no photo**). Repeat other side. Repeat **1 to 2** times. **Great stretch to reduce wrist/ hand/ forearm fatigue and prevent or treat "wrist tendonitis and/ or carpal tunnel". Repeat this stretch frequently, especially for your dominant hand.**

9a. Elbow Stretch Hold both arms out in front of you at shoulder level with palms down facing the floor. Next make a fist with both hands and tip both of your fists down towards the floor as in photo a and hold for 3 to 5 seconds. **You will feel the stretch on the back of your forearms. This is a great stretch to prevent or treat "Tennis elbow/ tendonitis of the elbow".** Now turn your fists in towards each other and hold for 3 to 5 seconds (no photo). Lastly do the same turning your fists to the outside/ away from each other (no photo) and hold for 3 to 5 seconds. **Photo b shows the elbow stretch with an overpressure.** Hold your R arm out in front of you with palm down and fingers extended (out straight). With your L hand gently pull your fingers back until you feel a forearm stretch and hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Add rotation to the inside and outside, holding for 3 to 5 seconds at each position. Repeat **1 to 2** times.

10. Shoulder Stretch (Posterior capsule) Reach your R arm directly across the front of your body at shoulder level and with your L arm gently give an overpressure to your R arm (just above your R elbow). Hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Repeat other side. Repeat **1** times. **You can tweak this exercise by changing the angle of your shoulder across your body, either above or below shoulder level at an angle.**

11. Doorway Chest Stretch Stand in a doorway with your feet staggered (one in front of the other) and your arms as shown in the photo with palms facing away of you and looking straight ahead (as making a field goal post). Hold this position for 3 to 5 seconds. Tweak this stretch by turning your head to the R side and hold for 3 to 5 seconds and repeat by turning your head to the L side and hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Repeat for **2 to 3** times and then switch your feet staggered position and repeat other side for 2 to 3 reps. If this posture of your shoulders and arms hurts/ bothers your shoulders just hold your arms down away from your sides with elbows straight and palms facing the door. **This is a great stretch to reduce stiffness to your neck/ chest/ shoulders/ trunk and hips.**

12. Hip Flexor Stretch Stand in a staggered stance with R foot forward and L foot back, with feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart. You may put front foot on a chair (per photo) or on stairs to increase this stretch. Lunge forward and lean back with hands on hips and hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Next lean back ward again and reach with your L hand overhead holding 3 to 5 seconds, repeat **2** times. Now side bend to the R and reach with your L hand and holding 3 to 5 seconds, repeat **2** times. Finally rotate to your R side reaching with your L hand and hold for 3 to 5 seconds, repeat **2** times. Now repeat 2 reps of each motion on the other side with R foot backwards and reaching with your R hand. **This stretch reduces lower back, shoulder and knee pain! Key stretch for those who sit for 4+ hours per work day.**

13. Quadricep Stretch Stand up tall and pull your R foot back towards your buttocks (gluteus maximus) and hold your R foot with your R hand for 3 to 5 seconds, repeat this for **1 to 2** repetitions. Try to maintain your knee position pointed straight down towards the floor which increases the stretch to your quadriceps and also hip flexor muscle. Repeat other side. **This stretch reduces the biomechanical stresses to your knee, hips and lower back.**

14. Hip Adductor/ Groin Stretch Start with your feet wider than shoulder width apart and feet pointed forward or with a slight toe out posture. Slowly bend forward reaching down towards the floor (between your feet) with both hands while breathing out and hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Now slowly reach both hands towards your R foot and hold for 3 to 5 seconds and lastly repeat this stretch reaching towards your L foot for 3 to 5 seconds. Repeat this stretch for **1** repetitions (You can also come up straight and reach for the sky with both hands between each change of position with this stretch too). You can further tweak this great hip stretch by; Staggering your feet, and toeing your feet in or out. **This stretch reduces the biomechanical stresses to your lower back, knees, and hips and will allow you to have more fun in your daily life at work and at play!**

15. Hamstring Stretch Stand up and extend your R leg in front of you onto a chair against the wall for stability (or you can use the stairs), gently pull the toes of your R foot back towards your head as in **photo a** and reach both of your arms in front of you towards your feet (**to help your balance and safety, you may want to do this stretch by a table/ wall/ or steady object**). Hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Then roll your R foot/ leg to the inside and hold for 3 to 5 seconds, then roll your leg to the outside holding for 3 to 5 seconds. It is common to be very stiff and uncomfortable rotating leg to inside. Another way to tweak this stretch is by reaching with both of your arms to the inside and outside of your R leg, while continuing to slowly rotate your leg reaching opposite of your foot rotation. **This is an outstanding stretch for your knees, back, shoulders and active body (Especially important for those who sit for most of their workdays).** Repeat other side. Repeat **2 to 3** times.

16. Sitting Piriformis Stretch Sit up tall and cross your R leg over your L knee. Turn your body to the R and gently pull your R knee up towards your L shoulder and hold for 5 to 10 seconds. Repeat **1 to 2** times, and repeat other side. **Key stretch to prevent or treat lower back pain, sciatic pain, and hip and knee pain. If you have sciatic nerve pain or lower back pain you must really be diligent in watching your seated and standing posture habits to reduce toe out, knees out sitting, or crossing your legs/ sitting on your feet and reduce your time in these postures each day... WorkSmart!**

17. Seated Twist (Rotation) Stretch Sitting up tall reach your R hand and put this on the outside of your L knee and gently twist towards your L side. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Repeat other side. Repeat **2** times. You can also tweak this stretch by reaching with your arm instead of holding your knee. **This is an excellent stretch to improve hip, shoulder, and trunk flexibility while reducing stiffness.**

18. Calf Stretch Stand facing a wall in a staggered stance L foot forward. R foot back (toes facing the wall). Have both hands reaching forward at shoulder height and lunge forward until you feel a stretch R calf. Hold 3 to 5 seconds. Shift hips to R side and hold 3 to 5 seconds. Shift hips to L side and hold for 3 to 5 seconds and repeat **2** times each side. Lunge forward until you feel a stretch R calf, hold 3 to 5 seconds. Then look back over R shoulder and hold for 3 to 5 seconds. Next look back over L shoulder and hold for 3 to 5 seconds, repeat **2** times for each side. **Great stretch to restore proper function to your whole body.** Repeat the same on other side with L foot backwards.

These are the **St. Luke's Health System "Industrial Athlete--WorkSmart" Stretches** that will improve your working bodies vitality as we age. They will also reduce the daily wear and tear and risks for injury, reduce stress, and improve our energy level to your working body. **Remember to do any one of these stretches more frequently during the workday or at home to reduce fatigue, or discomfort to your body. Taking Bio Ergonomic "Pit Stops" throughout your workday to reverse the postures you do frequently or to reverse and break up the sustained postures we do daily will keep your body healthy and feeling better for LIFE.** You and your family are worth the effort!

Disclaimer:

This program is intended to provide general instruction on the Industrial Athlete WorkSmart Stretching Plan to avoid workplace muscle fatigue and discomfort to your working, aging body. These types of exercises may not be appropriate for all individuals. Before beginning this or any other type of exercise program, consult with your physician and/ or physical therapist to determine what exercise program is suitable for you. If at any time while performing these exercises you experience any pain, numbness, and/ or tingling, discontinue performing these exercises and contact your physician immediately.

Sources:

1. WorkSmart - The Industrial Athlete Manual by Lauren Hebert DPT, OCS 96' from IMPACC USA. www.IMPACCtraining.com.
2. The Work Injury Consulting Practice "Chapter 7 - Stretching programs for the workplace" by Lauren Hebert DPT, OCS 1998.
3. Attending four Gray Institute "Chain Reaction" courses from 99' to 07' led by Gary Gray PT, FAFS and FVDS "Functional Flexibility - Enhancing Life 2.11" 8/20/04 www.grayinstitute.com

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