

Stretch-Flex for Health and Safety

Coordinator's Guide

1. Observe work routines, postures, and material handling tasks.
2. Select exercises that address the particular body segments most affected.
3. Keep the number of exercises in the routine to 4, no more than 6.
4. Avoid any "extreme" postures (toe touches) or sudden high acceleration or repetitive movements (twisting the torso from side to side).
5. Promote the planned introduction of the Stretch-Flex program and its benefits. Use Talking Points on the reverse side.
6. Train all responsible supervisors and managers about the program goals, scheduling, and the routine recommended. (Different departments will have different exposures and the routine will have to be adjusted accordingly.)
7. Establish a date for the "roll out" of the program and hold supervisors and managers accountable for following through.
8. Monitor the program and look for poor follow-through, such as not adhering to the posted schedule. Take note of the participation level, reach out to employees to solicit feedback about the program, and make adjustments as needed.

Group Leader's Guide

1. Send a notice to your group indicating the date, time, and location for the first session. Explain that this is an important component of the company's overall employee health and safety program.
2. Set aside about 20 minutes for the first session, as it will include a training component. Thereafter, the routines should take at least 5 minutes, but no longer than 10 minutes. This is only a "stretch-flex" routine, not muscle strengthening.
3. Advise your group of the goal of the program. If anyone is experiencing muscle or joint pain and/or discomfort, or has recently been treated for a musculoskeletal injury, he or she should not participate in the actual routine but listen and observe.
4. Avoid any "extreme" postures (toe touches) or sudden high acceleration or repetitive movements (twisting the torso from side to side).
5. Demonstrate each exercise first and then have the group participate.
6. Stress the importance of deep breaths at key points during the exercise.
7. Conclude by thanking everyone. Explain that this will now be a part of their daily work shift. Remind everyone to sign the training roster.

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Talking Points: Positive Effects of Properly Stretching at Work*

Reduces Fatigue

- Stretching muscles and joints can increase and promote the supply of blood and nutrients to joints and soft tissues (nerves, tendons, etc.).
- Stretching increases your heart rate and circulation of blood, and helps remove lactic acid build-up in muscles.
- Stretching raises the internal temperature of soft tissue and promotes greater elasticity of tissue.
- Stretching increases production of natural lubricants for bones and cartilage and thereby allows a greater range of motion and promotes the health of joints.

Improves Balance and Posture

- Stretching helps realign soft tissue (muscle, nerves, tendons, ligaments, etc.) so less effort is needed to maintain good posture.

Improves Muscle Coordination

- Stretching helps opposing muscle groups work in a more coordinated manner.



Republic Indemnity Standing Stretches poster

For information and materials, go to RepublicIndemnity.com/employers/loss-control, or contact our Loss Control Department at RICALC@ri-net.com.

*Source: <http://ergo-plus.com/workplace-stretching-benefits-work-readiness-system/>

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