

# Flexibility Exercises

(Ron Jones, MS, ACSM Health/Fitness Instructor, Corporate Wellcoach)



**Directions:** These are my favorite “extras” for those that still need a little more improvement after the warm-up and workout. You should generally “static stretch” only AFTER your workout when you are very warm. Static stretches are held for about 20-30 seconds. Relax about half way through to get a more stretch. Breathe into your stretch; don’t force...just flow. You can also pull out certain warm-up exercises in my *Dynamic Warm-Up* and add a holding component to them “after” your workouts.

**Dynamic Warm-Up Exercises:** I recommend that everyone performs a Dynamic Warm-Up daily—they are fundamental to improving your function based on my experiences. “Dynamic” Warm-Ups are designed to increase mobility, flexibility, and stability of joints and core while improving your ability to move properly without pain.

## UPPER BODY

### **Door Shoulder Stretch**

- Stand in doorway with one arm straight and outstretched then twist body carefully away from the door jam allowing your shoulder to “open up” & stretch on the front side.

### **Behind Back Reach & Lift**

- Reach back behind low back & grasp hands together. Press arms out & back as you lift up & stretch front shoulders.

### **Behind Back Reach & Hold**

- Reach back & over with one arm while the other arm comes back & up under arm pit. For optimal shoulder function, you should be able to touch the fingertips of both hands against each other. Do both ways—right over top then left over top. While you should be “equal” on both sides, most people are tighter on one side.

## LOWER BODY

### **Standing Hip Flexor**

- Split legs in lunge position then “pigeon toe” both feet (angle toes & feet in) & sink into lunge. Squeeze glutes on back leg hard so front hip flexors/quads go on stretch. For extra, reach up high with the stretching side & back around with the other arm towards the squeezing glutes.

### **Iron Cross**

- Lie on back then take one leg straight overhead and bring across body down to ground. Grab the crossed leg & pull up for more stretch. Do NOT log roll whole torso—make sure to keep shoulders pressed down on ground.

### **Pretzel Cross-Knee**

- Lie on your back & cross an ankle over a knee. Reach through legs & under knee of bottom leg then pull bottom leg back. You should feel a deep stretch on the low outside hip of the leg that is crossed over the top of the knee.

### **Seated Cross-Knee**

- Sit on ground then cross one foot over opposite knee. Gently twist body towards outside of the leg that is crossed as you push one elbow into outside of same knee. As you twist, look behind your body so you get spinal rotation from tailbone to skull.

### **Leaning Calf**

- Lean into wall with straight leg behind and heel ON GROUND. Both feet should be straight forward—*no turning out!* For variety on a second set, do the same but bend the back knee & drop into a semi-crouching position.

\* Ron Jones (9.5.07)