

Stretches

It is important to stretch the muscles that are weak each day to help with:

- Joint mobility and stiffness
- Comfort
- Preventing muscle shortening and contractures developing

How should stretches be completed?

- Use steady, slow even movements.
- Support vulnerable joints.
- Perform the movement slowly until you reach your full range of movement. If you experience pain or discomfort reduce the range of movement.
- Hold the stretch for at least 20-30 seconds.
- Repeat each stretch 3-5 times with a short rest in between each stretch. You should be able to stretch a little further on the last stretch than the first one.
- Do not hold your breath while stretching. Counting or singing out loud will stop you doing this.
- Make sure you are sitting up straight before you start your stretches. If you are slouching you will not be able to move as effectively.
- Active stretching helps to make sure muscles and joints stay healthy and a range of movement is maintained. If you are unable to do the stretches yourself, then passive stretches should be completed with help from another person.
- If another person is needed to help you do the stretches, they must consider their position when helping so they do not strain their back.
- If you are doing these stretches for another person and they have difficulty in communicating, please be mindful of pain. You may notice a change in facial expression or sounds that indicate they may be in pain. Ensure you undertake all the stretches slowly and reduce the range of stretch. Build up the stretches slowly as comfort allows.
- If you have any concerns regarding these stretches, please contact your occupational therapist or your physiotherapist.

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