

Musculoskeletal Disorders account for the largest number of all workplace injuries (primarily in construction). These injuries can result from years of accumulated stress on muscles, tendons, ligaments, and nerves.

A few minutes of early morning stretching, can make a big difference!

Today let's embrace a Stretch & Flex program to help reduce workplace injuries.

Start with a few from each section and add more as employees become familiar with how to perform each stretch.

Upper Body Stretches

Shoulder Shrug • Look straight ahead with arms relaxed at your sides. • Lift shoulders up toward your ear lobes. • Take a deep breath, count to three, and exhale. • Roll shoulders back as you return them to their natural position.

Neck Stretch • Look straight ahead, arms at your sides. • Drop your left ear toward your left shoulder. Don't raise your shoulder. • Take a deep breath, count to three, and exhale. • Return your head to an upright position. Don't roll your head forward or backward. • Repeat the exercise on the right.

Rotator Cuff Stretch • Reach up and place your right hand on your upper back. • Place the back of your left hand in middle of your back. • Reach your right hand toward your left, attempting to grasp fingers together. • Take a deep breath, count to three, and exhale. • Repeat the exercise on the opposite side.

Back Extension Stretch • Stand upright with feet shoulder-width apart. • Place both hands on the small of your back. • Lift your rib cage, arching your back. • Take a deep breath, count to three, and exhale. • Do not tip your head backward.

Shoulder Stretch • Stand upright with your feet shoulder width apart. • Clasp your hands behind your back. • Raise clasped hands, bending your elbows slightly until you feel a stretch. • Do not bend your body forward during the stretch. • Take a deep breath, count to three, and exhale.

Mid Body Stretches

Reach High • Stand up straight with your feet shoulder width apart. • Stretch your arms up over your head as high as you can. • Spread your fingers. • Take a deep breath, count to three, and exhale.

Wrist Curl Stretch • With your arms at your sides and your knuckles forward, make loose fists. • Curl fists in the direction of your elbows. • Take a deep breath, count to three, exhale, and relax your fists.

Palm Press Stretch • Place your palms together with fingers at chin level. • While keeping your palms together, press and lower your hands until you feel a stretch. • Be careful not to raise your shoulders. • Take a deep breath, count to three, exhale.

Side Bending Stretch • Stand upright with your feet shoulder width apart and place your left hand on your waist. • Reach overhead with your right arm. Bend slightly to the left, letting the weight of your right arm create the stretch. • Take a deep breath, count to three, exhale, and repeat the exercise on opposite side.

Side Turning Stretch • Stand upright with your feet shoulder width apart and your left hand on your right hip. • Reach your right arm straight up from your side, then move it slightly back with your palm forward and thumb up. Look over your right shoulder at your right hand. • Take a deep breath, count to three, exhale, and repeat the exercise on opposite side.

Cat Stretch • Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Bend down, putting your hands on slightly bent knees. • Look up, pointing your chin at the ceiling and creating an arch in your back. • Take a deep breath. As you exhale, count to three, tuck your chin into your chest, and round your back.

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Lower Body Stretches

Hamstring • Stand up straight, with your feet slightly apart. Slightly bend your left leg, putting hands on your left knee. • Extend your right leg, keeping your heel on the floor. Look straight ahead. • Increase stretch by bending your left knee more and pointing the toes of your right leg toward your chin. • Take a deep breath, count to three, exhale, and repeat the exercise on the opposite side.

Quad • Stand up straight with your feet slightly apart. • Extend your left arm or use a wall for balance. • Grasp your right ankle with your right hand and pull up toward your back. • Keep your body in good alignment with your knees close together. • Take a deep breath, count to three, exhale, and repeat the exercise on the opposite side.

Calf • Stand up straight with your feet slightly apart. • Step forward with your left foot. Bend and put both hands on your left knee. • Bend your right leg, leaning slightly forward and keeping both feet flat on the floor. • Take a deep breath, count to three, exhale, and repeat the exercise on the opposite side.

We also recommend stretching when returning from lunch and before hitting the road at the end of the workday.

This will reduce injuries, drive home a safety culture, and improve morale!

Just try it and see for yourself!