

## STRETCHES

### **How to prepare for exercise:**

1. *Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothes, with flat-soled shoes.*
2. *Ensure your space is free of clutter, and things you could trip on. Remove uneven rugs and any cables and floor clutter etc.*
3. *Choose a chair that is firm and supportive e.g. a dining chair, NOT your couch.*
4. *Make sure the room is a good temperature. Exercise will make you warmer, so perhaps open a window to allow airflow.*
5. *Stay hydrated. Keep a glass of water or a water bottle nearby.*

### **Try these stretches in your home:**

#### **General tips for stretching**

- Stretching is great for keeping your muscles and joints flexible and pain-free, especially in times of isolation when we typically spend more time sitting.
- Stretch until there is slight tension in the muscle, but not PAIN. If it's sore, you are stretching too far and you need to release the stretch a bit.
- Remember to breathe and relax through the movements.
- Perform these stretches at any point during the day, but particularly after strength and balance exercises.
- Hold each stretch for 15-30 seconds each side.

#### **1) Seated Hamstring Stretch**

- Sit on the edge of your chair and straighten one leg in front of you.
- Bending from the hips, lean forward and reach down your leg.
- You do NOT have to reach your toes. Only go until you can feel a stretch behind your upper leg.
- Hold for 15-30 seconds and then repeat on other side.



#### **2) Shoulder stretch**

- Reach one arm straight out in front of you, and bring it across your body.
- Using your other arm, support the elbow of your straight arm, and give it a slight pull towards you.
- Hold for 15-30 seconds and then repeat on other side.



### 3) Chest stretch

- Sit tall in your chair and reach your arms behind you towards the back of your chair.
- You should be able to feel a stretch across the front of your chest.
- Remain nice and tall in your chair, and hold for 15-30 seconds.
- Remember to keep breathing through the stretch.



### 4) Seated side bends

- Sit tall in your chair.
- Take your right arm straight up in the air, and lean towards your left side, bringing your upstretched arm towards the left as well.
- You should feel a stretch down the right hand side of your torso.
- Hold for 15-30 seconds and then repeat on the other side.



### 5) Upper back stretch

- Sitting tall in your chair, clasp your hands and stretch your arms out in front of you.
- Round your back and tuck your chin to your chest, to feel a stretch through your shoulder blades and upper back.
- Hold for 15-30 seconds.



### 6) Standing calf stretch

- Stand behind your chair with both hands resting on the chair.
- With one foot, take a generous step backwards.
- Keep both feet facing forward.
- Try to plant the back heel into the ground.
- Keep the front leg slightly bent at the knee.
- You should feel a stretch down the back of your lower leg (calf).
- Hold for 15-30 seconds and then repeat on the other side.



### 7) Quadriceps stretch – advanced

- Only attempt this stretch if you have great balance and flexibility in the hips and knees. This stretch can sometimes cause cramp, so attempt with caution.
- Standing behind your chair and holding on, bend one knee, bringing the foot up behind you.
- If you can, grab your foot. Otherwise reach where you can (ankle, bottom of your pants etc.)
- Remain tall and keep holding on.
- You should feel the stretch down the front of your thigh.
- Hold for 15-30 seconds and then repeat on the other side.

