



# Stand strong

## Maintain your muscle health

One of the most important ways to protect and support your muscles is to stretch regularly. Doing so allows you to move more easily and freely, whether you're walking, running, biking or playing a sport.



### HOW STRETCHING HELPS

Regular stretching can improve your flexibility, which in turn can:

- Decrease cramping and muscle soreness
- Help your joints move through their full range of motion
- Enhance your performance in physical activities

## Stretch it out

Stretching isn't just a warm-up or cool-down exercise. It can be done anytime and anywhere.

### BEFORE AND AFTER EXERCISE

Stretching helps prepare your body for exercise and assists the recovery process. It can also help improve your joint range of motion as well as reduce stress.



**ANYTIME, ANYWHERE** Try these simple leg stretches if you can

#### Front thigh stretch

- Stand next to a wall or use a chair for support. Make sure your feet are shoulder-width apart.
- Bend one knee so that your foot goes up toward your buttocks.
- Grab your ankle and pull it toward your buttocks as far as you can.
- Hold the stretch for 15–30 seconds. Repeat 2–4 times for each leg.

#### Calf stretch

- Stand and place your hands on a wall. Move one foot back as far as you can comfortably.
- Your toes should be facing forward, heels flat, with a bend in your knees.
- Lean into the stretch. You should feel the stretch in your back leg.
- Hold the stretch for 15–30 seconds. Repeat 2–4 times for each leg.

**Talk to your doctor about safe ways for you to stretch and keep your muscles healthy.**

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