

YOUR HEALTHY STEPS

BE ACTIVE & PAINFREE

1 FOAM ROLLERS

Foam Rolling is a great self maintenance tool that you can use right at home on a daily basis.

A foam roller is a cylinder of firm foam that is used to roll over the muscles of your body.

The purpose of foam rolling is to help break up scar tissue and adhesions that have accumulated in your muscle over the years. Breaking up scar tissue and adhesions allows the muscle to move more fluidly, more pain free, and with less risk of injury.



There are many different types of foam rollers from:

- very gentle (not very effective)
- to very extreme (way too intense).

The foam roller can be used on all the major muscle groups, can be used practically anywhere and can be used with varying degrees of intensity.

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2 STRETCHING

Most people are familiar with stretching, but did you know that there are generally 2 ways to stretch?

One type of stretching is Static Stretching. This type of stretching is where you stay in one place and gently elongate a muscle or muscle group.

You hold it for a count and then gently release.



The second type of stretching is Dynamic Stretching.

This type of stretching is a series of movements that are sports specific that have been designed to help prepare the muscle to perform. Static Stretching is much easier to learn, easy to do and can be performed anywhere.

Static stretching is best done following activity because the muscle is warmed up, but if done gently can basically be done at any time (at your office, before yard work, etc). Dynamic stretching require some training to learn and should be checked to see if it is being done correctly. It is a great way get the body warmed up for intense activity (running, tennis, golf, etc).

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Static Stretching done gently is a great way to bring energy and relaxation back into the body after it has been under stress for long periods (on the computer, in traffic, sitting, etc).

Stretching also helps increase flexibility of the muscle, increases blood flow, and improve range of motion for the muscles and joints of the body.



3 MOVEMENT

The human body was made for and benefits from movement.

This seems like a simple idea but it is amazing how many people go hours with very little body movement. It is recommended that most people should walk roughly **10,000 steps a day**, which comes out to 5 miles a day. The typical sedentary person may only walk 1,000 to 2,000 steps a day. If you are not up to or even close to 10,000 steps a day, don't let these numbers scare you. Just get started moving!

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The more activity you do the better you will feel and the more you will want to do. Walking gets you blood flowing, joints lubricated, relaxes the body, and focuses the mind.

The best way to get moving is set a time to walk every day, and do it! Walk around the parking lot, office compound, neighborhood, or city block.

If your job requires hours of sitting, set a timer to go off every hour to remind yourself to get up and move! Go visit the bathroom, the water cooler, read the bulletin board, etc. This is also a great time to add in some stretches. The best thing is, you'll feel better and be more productive when you get back.

4 POSTURE

Posture is the way in which we hold and align our body parts while we stand, sit and walk. Correct posture is incredibly important in reducing muscle pain and tightness.

When we are in correct posture the weight of the body is supported by our bones and is easily stabilized by our muscles. Incorrect posture reduces or removes the support of our bones, and places the entire support of our body onto the muscles.



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Incorrect posture reduces or removes the support of our bones, and places the entire support of our body onto the muscles. Eventually muscles will become fatigued, weakened, tight, sore, and locked down. This creates wear and tear on our joints, increases the possibility of injury, and makes us sore and tight.

It's important to understand that being in correct posture 100% of the time is difficult for most people. Good posture takes time, practice and education. Posture is a combination of habit plus muscle strength.

Having a basic understanding of good posture helps us self correct bad posture. The best place to start is with an awareness of what good posture looks like. A goal to work towards is being able to align your ears with your shoulders and hips when sitting.

Good standing posture is aligning your ears, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles.

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B E A C T I V E & P A I N F R E E

Since good or correct posture is hard to maintain it is important to check in with ourselves periodically throughout the day. Setting a timer to go off every 15-20 minutes helps you to become aware of what your posture is like during the day.

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A goal to work towards is being able to align your ears with your shoulders and hips when sitting. Good standing posture is aligning your ears, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles.

I also use pillows to support my lower back while working at the computer and while driving. These pillows support my posture while doing these activities and have made a world of difference for me.

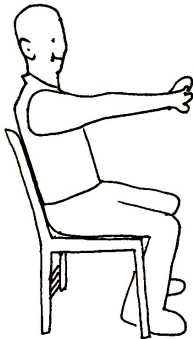
Foam rolling, movement and stretching will all work together to improve your posture. Keep in mind that correct posture is difficult to achieve by yourself, and having support from a Physical Therapist, Chiropractor or Massage Therapist will greatly improve your results.

Your HealthySteps Check List

Set your timer every hour for:

1. ___ Movement: Get up and move (get water, walk down hallway etc.)
2. ___ Stretches: Gently follow instructions below.
3. ___ Posture: Realign your body for good posture as you return back to work.

Office Stretches:



(Part 1) Start in good posture, stretch your arms out in front of you. Place the right hand on the back of the left hand. Gently pull your arms away from you (feeling a good stretch in between your shoulders).

(Part 2) Hold and gently pull the left hand toward you feeling a stretch in the wrist. Repeat 3-5 times. Then switch hands and repeat.

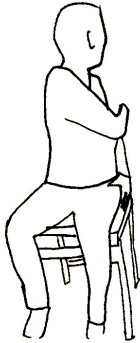


Start in good posture, grab both sides of your chair with both hands. Gently, lean your head to the right. Feel a nice stretch in your neck and shoulders. Hold for the count of 5 while slowly inhaling and exhaling. Return head to the upright position.

Repeat 3 times. Repeat with the left side.

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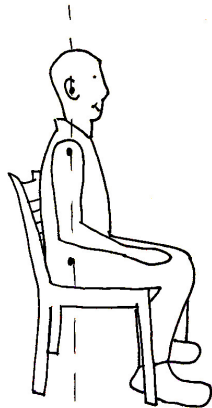


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Hold for the count of 5 while slowly inhaling and exhaling. Return head to the upright position.

Repeat 3 times. Repeat with the left side.

Posture:



When sitting or standing, hold head back so ears line up with shoulders.

Rotate shoulders back and check that your shoulders line up with hips. Elongate your spine and neck so that you are tall, not slouched. Take a deep breath, notice how your body feels in alignment.

Foam Rolling:

Daily self care to be done before or after exercise or at the end of the day.

For more information, visit YourHealthyStepsTools.com

