

# Your body needs a break to stay strong

Care for your musculoskeletal system and prevent injury



Your body keeps you moving from one task to the next, which is why good musculoskeletal health is so important. Your musculoskeletal system is made up of all the bones and muscles that support your body and help you move.<sup>1</sup>

While the purpose of this system is to keep you moving, the repetitive movements of everyday life can be hard on your body. Sometimes you can actually injure yourself by repeating the same motion day after day without the proper rest. When this happens, it's called a repetitive motion disorder (RMD). These injuries typically affect the hands, wrists, elbows, and shoulders, and may cause numbness, sharp pain, or swelling that disrupt your daily routine.

## Most common RMDs<sup>1,2</sup>

- **Tendonitis** is the inflammation of the tendon where it enters the muscle. The most common symptom of tendonitis is pain in the irritated area.
- **Bursitis** is when one of the fluid-filled sacs that cushion areas of friction between your tendons and bones becomes inflamed. Bursitis may cause limited range of motion, pain, and swelling in the affected area.
- **Carpal tunnel syndrome** is caused by pressure on a nerve in the wrist. Since a nerve is being affected with this RMD, you may experience numbness or tingling in your hand, wrist, or arm.

## A pain-free future

Full recovery from an RMD is possible with the proper rest and treatment. By taking steps now to protect your bones and muscles, you can keep doing the things you need to do every day.



## Tips for preventing and treating RMDs<sup>2</sup>

- Take frequent breaks to stretch and give your body time to rest.
- Adjust your chair and desk at work so you're sitting in a natural position.
- Keep an upright posture. Avoid leaning forward or backward.
- Use a splint to lessen pressure on the affected muscles and nerves.
- Put ice on the affected area.
- Try physical therapy to relieve soreness and pain.

## Preventing musculoskeletal injuries at work

Any sort of job where you repeat the same motion over and over can cause stress to your bones and muscles. This includes sitting or standing in a certain position for an extended period of time. Having adjustable furniture at your workstation can help keep your body in the most natural positions possible, so you don't have to lean forward or backward any more than necessary. It can also help to take frequent breaks if you find yourself sitting most of the day, and perform basic stretches at the start and end of each shift.<sup>3</sup>



**Take your health in your own hands.**

You can find more information on how to keep your body feeling great at [anthem.com/blog](https://www.anthem.com/blog).

<sup>1</sup> Cleveland Clinic website: *Musculoskeletal System* (accessed June 2021); [my.clevelandclinic.org](https://my.clevelandclinic.org).

<sup>2</sup> National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke website: *Repetitive Motion Disorder Information Page* (accessed June 2021); [ninds.nih.gov](https://ninds.nih.gov).

<sup>3</sup> Cleveland Clinic website: *Carpal Tunnel Syndrome* (accessed June 2021); [my.clevelandclinic.org](https://my.clevelandclinic.org).

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is the trade name of: In Colorado: Rocky Mountain Hospital and Medical Service, Inc. HMO products underwritten by HMO Colorado, Inc. Copies of Colorado network access plans are available on request from member services or can be obtained by going to [anthem.com/co/networkaccess](https://www.anthem.com/co/networkaccess). In Connecticut: Anthem Health Plans, Inc. In Georgia: Blue Cross Blue Shield Healthcare Plan of Georgia, Inc. In Indiana: Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. In Kentucky: Anthem Health Plans of Kentucky, Inc. In Maine: Anthem Health Plans of Maine, Inc. In Missouri (excluding 30 counties in the Kansas City area): RightCHOICE® Managed Care, Inc. (RIT), Healthy Alliance® Life Insurance Company (HALIC), and HMO Missouri, Inc. RIT and certain affiliates administer non-HMO benefits underwritten by HALIC and HMO benefits underwritten by HMO Missouri, Inc. RIT and certain affiliates only provide administrative services for self-funded plans and do not underwrite benefits. In Nevada: Rocky Mountain Hospital and Medical Service, Inc. HMO products underwritten by HMO Colorado, Inc., dba HMO Nevada. In New Hampshire: Anthem Health Plans of New Hampshire, Inc. HMO plans are administered by Anthem Health Plans of New Hampshire, Inc. and underwritten by Matthew Thornton Health Plan, Inc. In Ohio: Community Insurance Company. In Virginia: Anthem Health Plans of Virginia, Inc. trades as Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Virginia, and its service area is all of Virginia except for the City of Fairfax, the Town of Vienna, and the area east of State Route 123. In Wisconsin: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wisconsin (BCBSWI), underwrites or administers PPO and indemnity policies and underwrites the out of network benefits in POS policies offered by CompCare Health Services Insurance Corporation (CompCare) or Wisconsin Collaborative Insurance Corporation (WCIC). CompCare underwrites or administers HMO or POS policies; WCIC underwrites or administers Well Priority HMO or POS policies. Independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Anthem is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc.



# Healthy habits for a strong back

Learn a few tips to keep your back in tip-top shape



Back pain affects about 80% of adults at some point in their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> Let's take a closer look at what causes it and what you can do to keep your back in good health and protect it from injury.

## Common causes of poor back health<sup>1</sup>

- Aging
- Trauma
- Obesity
- Smoking
- Poor posture
- Overexertion
- Inactive lifestyle
- Low fitness level
- Physically-demanding work
- Chronic diseases like osteoporosis, a common bone disease that causes the body to lose too much bone, make too little bone, or both.<sup>2</sup>

## Helpful tips to keep your back in shape<sup>1</sup>

- **Eat a balanced diet to stay at a healthy weight.** Extra fat around the waistline puts pressure on your lower back muscles, so keeping your weight in check can make a big difference. A diet rich in vitamin D and calcium can help promote new bone growth, which supports your overall bone health and density.<sup>3</sup>

- **Sit in a chair with good lumbar support.** Keep your shoulders back and switch sitting positions often. You should also take breaks and get up and walk around or gently stretch muscles to relieve tension.
- **Check your posture at night.** Sleeping on a firm mattress on your side with your knees drawn up in a fetal position can help open up the joints in the spine and relieve pressure.
- **Watch your back when you lift objects.** Don't try to lift things that are too heavy. When you do have to lift, lift from the knees, pull your stomach muscles in, and keep your head down and in line with a straight back. When lifting, keep objects close to the body.
- **Quit smoking.** Smoking reduces blood flow to the lower spine, which can cause poor back health. Smoking also increases your risk of osteoporosis and prevents healing.



## Stay in the know

Find resources, tips and useful videos for back health on [knowyourback.org](https://www.knowyourback.org).

Anthem  

 COVAcare

COVA HDHP

### Sources:

1 National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke website: Low Back Pain Fact Sheet (access March 2018) [ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Fact-Sheets/Low-Back-Pain-Fact-Sheet](https://ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Fact-Sheets/Low-Back-Pain-Fact-Sheet).

2 National Osteoporosis Foundation website: What is Osteoporosis and What Causes It? (access March 2018) [nof.org/patients/what-is-osteoporosis](https://www.nof.org/patients/what-is-osteoporosis).

3 Live Strong website: Foods That Promote Bone Growth (accessed March 2018) [livestrong.com](https://www.livestrong.com)

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is the trade name of: In Colorado: Rocky Mountain Hospital and Medical Service, Inc. HMO products underwritten by HMO Colorado, Inc. Copies of Colorado network access plans are available on request from member services or can be obtained by going to [anthem.com/co/networkaccess](https://anthem.com/co/networkaccess). In Connecticut: Anthem Health Plans, Inc. In Georgia: Blue Cross Blue Shield Healthcare Plan of Georgia, Inc. In Indiana: Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. In Kentucky: Anthem Health Plans of Kentucky, Inc. In Maine: Anthem Health Plans of Maine, Inc. In Missouri (excluding 30 counties in the Kansas City area): RightCHOICE® Managed Care, Inc. (RIT), Healthy Alliance® Life Insurance Company (HALIC), and HMO Missouri, Inc. RIT and certain affiliates administer non-HMO benefits underwritten by HALIC and HMO benefits underwritten by HMO Missouri, Inc. RIT and certain affiliates only provide administrative services for self-funded plans and do not underwrite benefits. In Nevada: Rocky Mountain Hospital and Medical Service, Inc. HMO products underwritten by HMO Colorado, Inc., dba HMO Nevada. In New Hampshire: Anthem Health Plans of New Hampshire, Inc. HMO plans are administered by Anthem Health Plans of New Hampshire, Inc. and underwritten by Matthew Thornton Health Plan, Inc. In Ohio: Community Insurance Company. In Virginia: Anthem Health Plans of Virginia, Inc. trades as Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Virginia, and its service area is all of Virginia except for the City of Fairfax, the Town of Vienna, and the area east of State Route 123. In Wisconsin: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wisconsin (BCBSWI), underwrites or administers PPO and indemnity policies and underwrites the out of network benefits in POS policies offered by CompCare Health Services Insurance Corporation (CompCare) or Wisconsin Collaborative Insurance Corporation (WCIC). CompCare underwrites or administers HMO or POS policies; WCIC underwrites or administers Well Priority HMO or POS policies. Independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Anthem is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc.

24107ANMENABS VP00 3/18

# Stand up straight? How do you do that?

## A guide to posture in the workplace

Many of us heard it a lot growing up – “Stand up straight! Don’t slouch!” But what does it really mean to stand up straight? Experts have come up with some guidelines for correct posture. So sit up straight, and read on.

### Correct sitting position

- Sit up with your back straight and your shoulders back.
- Distribute your body weight evenly on both hips.
- Bend your knees at a right angle. Keep your knees even with your hips, using a footrest or stool if necessary. Keep your feet flat on the floor. Try to break the habit of crossing your legs.
- Try to avoid sitting in the same position for more than 30 minutes.
- At work, if you have a desk job, adjust your chair height and workstation so you can sit at a comfortable distance to your computer screen and paperwork. Your eyes should be looking at the top of your computer monitor, then washing down over the screen. Rest your elbows and arms on your chair or desk, keeping your shoulders relaxed, and your elbows at about a 90-degree bend.



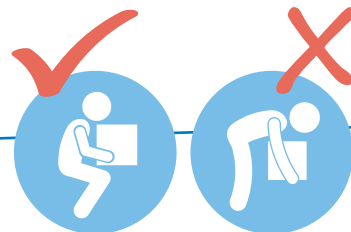
### Correct driving position

- Use a back support (lumbar roll) at the curve of your back. Your knees should be at the same level as your hips.
- Keep your arms relaxed and avoid “over-gripping” the steering wheel.
- Move the seat close to the steering wheel to support the curve of your back. The seat should be close enough to allow your knees to bend and your feet to reach the pedals, but far enough to stay a safe distance from the airbag. Placing yourself 10 inches from your driver airbag will give you a clear margin of safety.



### Correct lifting position

- Before you lift a heavy object, make sure you have firm footing.
- To pick up an object that is lower than the level of your waist, keep your back straight and bend at your knees and hips. Do not bend forward at the waist with your knees straight.
- Stand with a wide stance close to the object you are trying to pick up and keep your feet firm on the ground. Tighten your stomach muscles and lift the object using your leg muscles. Straighten your knees in a steady motion. Don’t jerk the object up to your body.
- Avoid lifting heavy objects above waist level.
- Hold packages close to your body with your arms bent. Keep your stomach muscles tight. Take small steps and go slowly.
- To lower the object, place your feet as you did to lift, tighten stomach muscles and bend your hips and knees.





# Drug-free ways to ease pain

Consider healthier alternatives to opioids and other pain medications



Pain can have you reaching for over-the-counter or prescription drugs for fast relief. However, taking multiple medications or taking them too much or too often can lead to problems such as organ damage, bad drug interactions, and addiction.

## Comfort without pills

There are simple and natural ways to ease your pain. Ask your doctor about using these techniques alone or in combination with medications:



**Relax** — Deep breathing and meditation can slow your heart rate and help you relax. Listening to music or thinking of things that comfort you can help boost your spirits and lower your stress reaction to pain.



**Move** — Being active releases “feel good” chemicals in your brain that can lessen pain and boost your sense of well-being. If your doctor approves, try moderate physical activity to prevent your muscles from becoming weak and causing more pain.



**Quit** — Smoking makes pain worse. Tobacco chemicals make it hard for oxygen and nutrients to reach different parts of the body. This slows down healing and weakens tissues, resulting in painful conditions like osteoporosis and arthritis.



**Soothe** — Hot and cold therapies can help when you're stressed or injured. A cool cloth on your skin can keep swelling and inflammation down. A heating pad can relieve back aches, and a hot shower can ease tension headaches.



**Laugh** — When you laugh, your body produces its own natural painkillers, and you feel more relaxed and less sensitive to aches and pain.



**Connect** — When you feel lonely and disconnected, the emotional pain can build up into a physical pain. Social support and emotional connections help you cope with chronic pain.

Talk to your doctor to understand the risks and benefits of your options for managing pain.



Sources:  
Mayo Clinic website: Stress relief from laughter? It's no joke (accessed November 2021); mayoclinic.org.  
National Library of Medicine website: Mechanisms and efficacy of heat and cold therapies for musculoskeletal injury (accessed November 2021); pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.  
OnHealth website: Pain Management: 15 Easy Ways to Reduce Chronic Pain (accessed November 2021); onhealth.com.

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is the trade name of: In Colorado: Rocky Mountain Hospital and Medical Service, Inc. HMO products underwritten by HMO Colorado, Inc. Copies of Colorado network access plans are available on request from member services or can be obtained by going to [anthem.com/co/networkaccess](http://anthem.com/co/networkaccess). In Connecticut: Anthem Health Plans, Inc. In Georgia: Blue Cross Blue Shield Healthcare Plan of Georgia, Inc. In Indiana: Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. In Kentucky: Anthem Health Plans of Kentucky, Inc. In Maine: Anthem Health Plans of Maine, Inc. In Missouri (excluding 30 counties in the Kansas City area): RightCHOICE® Managed Care, Inc. (RIT), Healthy Alliance® Life Insurance Company (HALIC), and HMO Missouri, Inc. RIT and certain affiliates administer non-HMO benefits underwritten by HALIC and HMO benefits underwritten by HMO Missouri, Inc. RIT and certain affiliates only provide administrative services for self-funded plans and do not underwrite benefits. In Nevada: Rocky Mountain Hospital and Medical Service, Inc. HMO products underwritten by HMO Colorado, Inc., dba HMO Nevada, Inc. trades as Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Virginia, and its service area is all of Virginia except for the City of Fairfax, the Town of Vienna, and the area east of State Route 123. In Wisconsin: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wisconsin (BCBSWI), underwrites or administers PPO and indemnity policies and underwrites the out of network benefits in POS policies offered by CompCare Health Services Insurance Corporation (CompCare) or Wisconsin Collaborative Insurance Corporation (WCIC). CompCare underwrites or administers HMO or POS policies; WCIC underwrites or administers Well Priority HMO or POS policies. Independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Anthem is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc.

105879ANMENABS VP0D BY Rev 11/21

# Setting Up Your Workstation

## Advice from the experts

OSHA, the Occupational Safety & Health Administration, is the part of the United States Department of Labor that ensures safe and healthful working conditions by setting and enforcing standards in the workplace. So they know their stuff when it comes to workstation setup. Here are a few pointers they mention:

Your head should be level, or bent slightly forward, forward facing, and balanced. Generally it should be in-line with the torso.

Elbows should be in close to the body and are bent between 90 and 120 degrees.

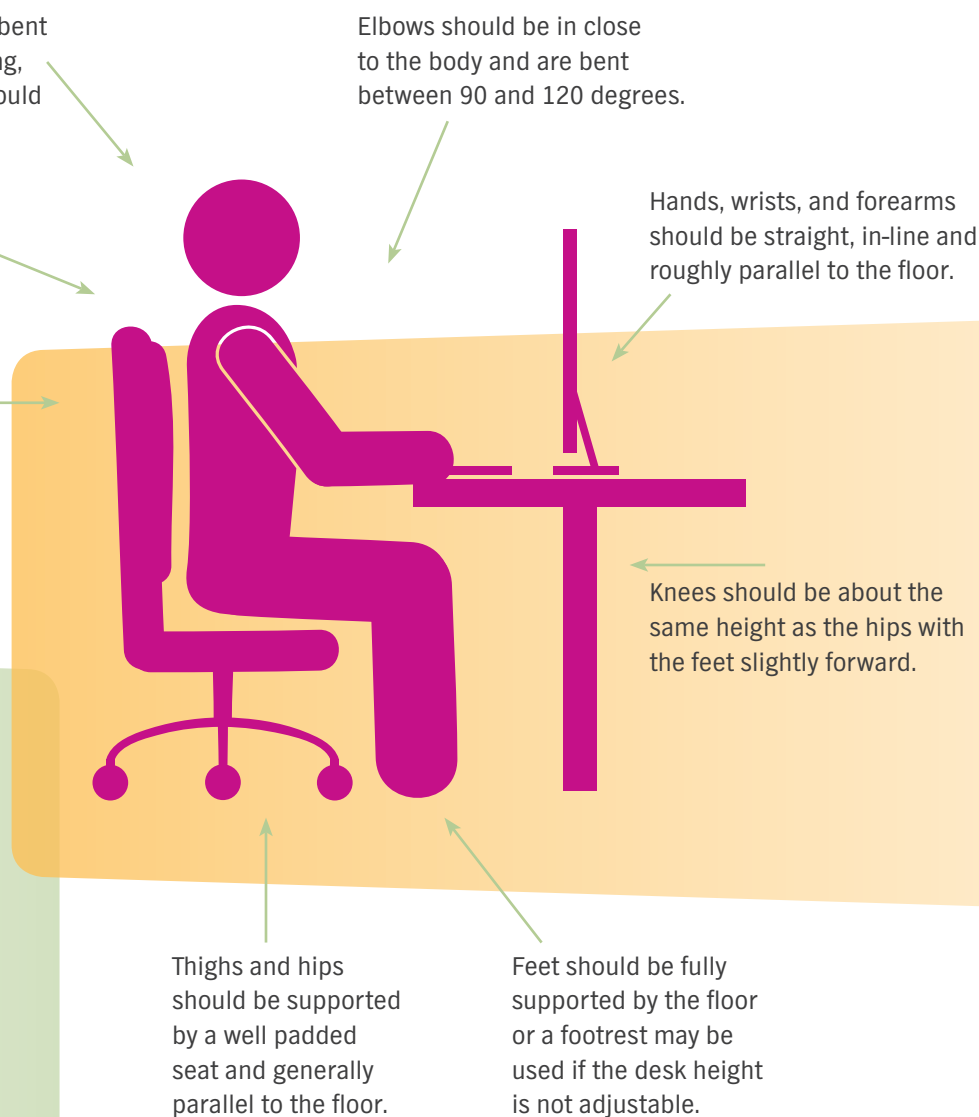
Shoulders should be relaxed and upper arms hang normally at the side of the body.

Hands, wrists, and forearms should be straight, in-line and roughly parallel to the floor.

Your back should be fully supported with appropriate lumbar support when sitting vertical or leaning back slightly.

Regardless of how good your working posture is, working in the same posture or sitting still for prolonged periods is not healthy. You should change your working position frequently throughout the day in the following ways:

- Make small adjustments to your chair or backrest.
- Stretch your fingers, hands, arms, and torso.
- Stand up and walk around for a few minutes periodically.



Thighs and hips should be supported by a well padded seat and generally parallel to the floor.

Feet should be fully supported by the floor or a footrest may be used if the desk height is not adjustable.



# Give your diet a do-over

Forget juicing, fasting, and fad diets. Just focus on being healthy and fit. When you eat right and exercise regularly, maintaining a healthy weight can happen naturally.

## Fill up with fiber

High-fiber foods fill you up without filling you out. Getting enough fiber each day can help you lose weight, regulate your blood sugar, and lower your cholesterol – all without counting calories.

## Make time to move

Cutting calories can help you lose weight, but keeping it off long-term is a different story. Exercise is a must – aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity, 5 times a week, to keep lost pounds from coming back.\*

## Rethink your drinks

There's more to maintaining your weight than watching what's on your plate. Calories from soda, juice, and alcohol add up fast. Switch to mostly water to help keep your weight from creeping up over time.

Visit [kp.org/weight](https://kp.org/weight).

\*\*American Heart Association Recommendations for Physical Activity in Adults and Kids," American Heart Association, 2018, heart.org.

Kaiser Permanente health plans around the country: Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., in Northern and Southern California and Hawaii • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Colorado • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Georgia, Inc., Nine Piedmont Center, 3495 Piedmont Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30305, 404-364-7000 • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc., in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., 2101 E. Jefferson St., Rockville, MD 20852 • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest, 500 NE Multnomah St., Suite 100, Portland, OR 97232 • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Washington or Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Washington Options, Inc., 601 Union St., Suite 3100, Seattle, WA 98101





# Healthy habits for a healthy weight

Forget juicing, fasting, and fad diets. Just focus on being healthy and fit. When you eat right and exercise regularly, maintaining a healthy weight can happen naturally.

## Fill up with fiber

High-fiber foods fill you up without filling you out. Getting enough fiber each day can help you lose weight, regulate your blood sugar, and lower your cholesterol – all without counting calories.

## Make time to move

Cutting calories can help you lose weight, but keeping it off long-term is a different story. Exercise is a must – aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity, 5 times a week, to keep lost pounds from coming back.\*

## Rethink your drinks

There's more to maintaining your weight than watching what's on your plate. Calories from soda, juice, and alcohol add up fast. Switch to mostly water to help keep your weight from creeping up over time.

Visit [kp.org/weight](https://kp.org/weight).

\*\*American Heart Association Recommendations for Physical Activity in Adults and Kids," American Heart Association, 2018, heart.org.

Kaiser Permanente health plans around the country: Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., in Northern and Southern California and Hawaii • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Colorado • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Georgia, Inc., Nine Piedmont Center, 3495 Piedmont Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30305, 404-364-7000 • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc., in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., 2101 E. Jefferson St., Rockville, MD 20852 • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest, 500 NE Multnomah St., Suite 100, Portland, OR 97232 • Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Washington or Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Washington Options, Inc., 601 Union St., Suite 3100, Seattle, WA 98101



STAYING HEALTHY

# Making Exercise A Lifestyle Choice



**Plan ahead.** Make physical activity a regular part of your daily schedule and write it on your calendar. Plan to be active most days of the week.

**Add physical activity to your daily routine.** Walk or ride your bike to work or when going shopping. Park farther away from your destination or exercise while you watch TV.

**Set goals.** Short periods of at least 10 minutes of physical activity throughout the day will add up health benefits.

**Prevent injury.** Learn how to warm up and cool down; wear the proper clothing and shoes.

**Chart your progress.** Keep a written log, or use [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov) to track your progress.

**Weather-proof your activities.** Indoor activities like dancing, calisthenics, stair-climbing, jumping rope, and mall walking are always available.

**Exercise for energy.** Schedule physical activities when you feel most energetic, and watch your energy level increase as you continue to exercise.

**Consult with your doctor,** if you have a chronic health condition, about the types and amounts of physical activity that are right for you.

**Most of all...have fun.** Select physical activities you enjoy and that match your abilities, and stick with them.

*Adapted from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. Washington (DC): U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2008. Available at: <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines>.*

For more information, visit  
[optimahealth.com/mylifemyplan](http://optimahealth.com/mylifemyplan)

**OptimaHealth**   
A Service of Sentara

## Staying Healthy Programs

For more information, visit [wellnessforme.com](https://wellnessforme.com)

### Eating for Life

Develop healthy eating and exercise habits

### Get Off Your Butt: Stay Smokeless for Life

Quit tobacco to improve your health

### Guided Meditation

Experience a retreat from everyday stressors

### Healthy Habits Healthy You

Develop habits to prevent diabetes and heart disease

### Tai Chi

Learn to mentally and physically relax

### WalkAbout With Healthy Edge

Walk your way to better health

### Yoga

Stretching and strengthening exercises





# 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.**

**Aetna is the brand name used for products and services provided by one or more of the Aetna group of companies, including Aetna Life Insurance Company and its affiliates (Aetna).**

The information provided by Aetna® health and wellness programs is general in nature. It is not meant to replace the advice or care you get from your doctor or other health professional. If you have specific health care needs or would like more complete health information, please see your doctor or other health care provider. Refer to **Aetna.com** for more information about Aetna plans.

[Aetna.com](https://www.aetna.com)

