

## *Downtown Chiropractic*

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### **Rules for Stretching**

By now you have been given a set of stretches to perform daily in order to help you feel better faster and to maintain your health. There are many reasons you should perform these stretches as prescribed, but the most important one is so that you do not have frequent pain and to minimize the chance of future aches and pains.

These stretches that you have been given are designed to increase your flexibility and muscle endurance. By doing this, you decrease your chance of re-injury or further pain. To help with this, I have developed the **Three Rules of Stretching**.

1. Do not bounce while stretching. Bouncing, or moving rapidly into and out of the stretch, may seem to help you stretch better, but in reality, it allows you to over-stretch the target muscle. When you over-stretch a muscle, you re-injure the muscle. This can cause the muscle to go into spasm to protect itself. This spasm will cause the muscle to tighten instead of loosen like we want it to.
2. Remember to breathe. Slow, deep breaths help to get oxygen into your bloodstream and into your muscles. Your muscles need oxygen in order to relax fully. This will help you to get the most efficient stretch possible.
3. You should not feel pain while stretching. You should feel a gentle pulling in the muscle while performing a stretch, but it should not be painful. If the stretch is painful, then you are doing more damage to the target muscle than good. This may cause the muscle to tighten, which defeats the purpose of stretching.

If you follow these three rules AND perform your stretches daily as prescribed, you should notice an improvement in your flexibility and muscle endurance. For most stretches prescribed in this office, you should hold each stretch for 20 seconds, and then stretch the other side for 20 seconds. This should be done two times in the morning and two times at night.

Additionally, you should not stretch a cold muscle. This does not mean you have to run around the block before stretching, but you should get up and move around a little, walk around the house for 5-10 minutes, before stretching.

If you have any questions about the stretches given to you, or the rules in this handout, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Travis Oller at 233-2300.