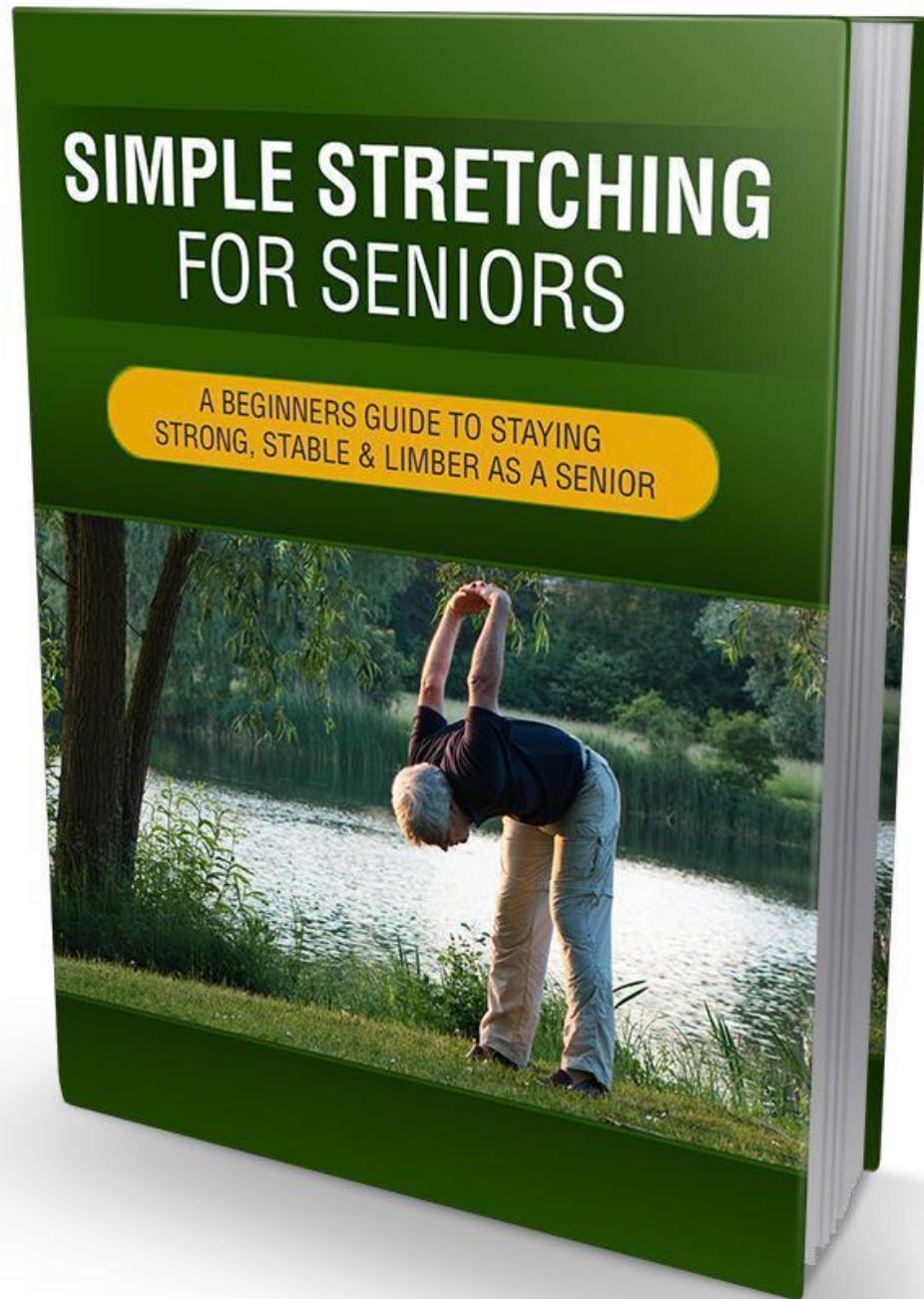


## Simple Stretching For Seniors



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# Introduction

Hello and welcome to our short, introductory guide on simple stretching techniques to keep stable & limber for seniors.

As you get older, your body will go through a lot of changes. Your hair will turn grey or white, your skin will become wrinkled, and your body will become stiff as you suffer from joint, muscle, and bone problems. For many years, we've accepted that stiffening of the joints and tightening of the muscles were a natural part of aging, but new research suggests otherwise.

Research has now found that at least half of the changes aging people experience in regards to their joints, muscles, and bones are a direct result of a lack of activity.

However, when less than 10 percent of people over the age of 50 aren't getting enough exercise to maintain their health at the very least, it's no wonder that so many people have accepted their fates as normal.

# **Bone and Muscle Problems in the Aging Body**

The most common bone and muscle problems the aging body may experience include osteoarthritis when the cartilage in your joints begins to break down, osteomalacia which is a softening of the bones, osteoporosis that leads to brittle bones when bones lose their mass, rheumatoid arthritis which is an inflammation in the joints, and general muscle weakness and pain.

## **Muscle Changes**

As we age, there are a few changes that our muscles go through that lead to the above problems. Our muscle fibers become smaller and we have less of them, and nervous system changes lead to less muscle tone and a decreased ability to contract muscles. Lost muscle tissue is regenerated more slowly than before and the tissue that replaces it is often tough and fibrous.

## **Bone Changes**

We don't often think of bones as living tissue, but they absolutely are, and also go through changes as we age. Our bones begin to lose more calcium and other important minerals because of the hormonal changes that occur as we age. Women are especially vulnerable after they've gone through menopause, but men are also affected by bone loss that occurs with age.

## **Joint Changes**

The movement in our joints is a result of the movement of ligaments, the flowing of synovial fluid which surrounds your joints, and layers of cartilage that keeps bones from coming into direct contact with each other. However, in the aging body, ligaments can become shorter and less flexible, there is less synovial fluid to lubricate joints, and cartilage thins. All of this leads to stiffening in the joints.

## **How This Guide Can Help You**

A surprising number of these age-related conditions can be reversed or prevented by doing regular exercise and stretching exercises. This course specifically focuses on how to use stretching as a way to maintain limberness and flexibility no matter how old you are. The truth is, it's never too late to start doing something for your body.

By the end of this guide, you will have all the tools you need to keep your body in the best possible shape so you can enjoy your golden years

# Chapter 1 – An Overview Of Stretching The Aging Body And Basic Anatomy

The primary goal of stretching the aging body is to prevent muscles and joints from becoming stiff from disuse. By regularly stretching your muscles and flexing your joints, you can help prevent many of the age-related conditions that affect the joints, muscles, and bones of an aging body. In this part of the guide, we're going to go over the major muscle groups and joints that are most important to keep limber.

## The 11 Major Muscle Groups

There are 11 major muscle groups that you want to make sure you're using regularly and keeping stretched out. If you are also doing strength training exercises, these are the same muscle groups that you will be working out with that.

**Forearms** – Your lower arm has several muscles that are particularly important for lifting and holding objects.

**Biceps** – A large muscle found in each of your upper arms, your biceps help your forearms with lifting things.

**Triceps** – These are the other 2 muscles that are found in your upper arms. They help your body extend and bend your elbow.

**Shoulders** – There are a number of muscles on your front, back, and side that make up the shoulders which are responsible for arm movement.

**Trapezius** – Often referred to as traps, these are the muscles in your upper back that helps move your neck, head, and shoulder blade.

**Chest** – This group of muscles that covers your ribcage is responsible for helping with arm movement and breathing.

**Abdominals** – This important group of muscles located in your abdomen help with breathing and support your spine. They are often referred to as abs or your core muscles.

**Back** – One of the biggest muscle groups, your back muscles help support your spine and are a part of hip movement.

**Quadriceps** – These are the four muscles that are found at the front of your thigh and are a vital part of leg movement as they help control the hip and knee movements.

**Hamstrings** – The group of muscle that makes up the back of your thigh and help with the movement of the hip and knee as well.

**Calves** – The muscles found in your lower leg are what help you move your knee and flex your ankle.

## The 7 Major Joints

Although you have a number of smaller joints in your fingers and toes, there are 7 major joints in the rest of your body that we're going to cover. Every joint is made up of a combination of muscles that provide the movement, ligaments and tendons that connect bones and muscles, and bones.

**Spine** – Your spine helps support your upper body and houses the nerves that run to every body system. It's made up of a number of individual vertebrae.

**Shoulder** – Primarily responsible for whole arm movements.

**Elbow** – In the middle of your arm, it helps with lifting.

**Wrist** – Made up of a number of parts, your wrist is an important part of hand movement.

**Hip** – Another ball-and-socket joint, this one responsible for whole leg movements.

**Knee** – This leg joint helps you to walk.

**Ankle** – Another joint that has many parts, your ankle stabilizes your legs and helps with walking.

In the next section, we'll be getting more into the science of why stretching these muscle groups can help with the aging bod

## **Chapter 2 – Why Stretching is Beneficial to the Aging Body**

As we discussed before, there are a number of problems with our joints, muscles, and bones that we face as our body ages. Fortunately, there is something that we can do about it, and that is stretching. Stretching along with other physical activities can help to prevent or even reverse many of the problems we discussed before.

### **Muscles and Stretching**

When you're not using your muscles enough, they can become stiff which leads to painful movements. By regularly stretching, you can keep your muscles from getting stiff and improve their elasticity. The more elastic your muscles are, the less pain you will experience when you go about your day and the more you will be able to do.

Another benefit to regularly stretching your aging muscles is that it will improve your balance. This is because when your muscles are regularly stretched, they can respond better to movements

which helps you stay balanced. This will not only allow you to be more confident when doing other exercises, but will help prevent falls which are especially dangerous for the aging body.

## **Bones and Stretching**

While stretching itself doesn't contribute to strengthening your bones, a number of exercises do, including walking, which you need to do before each stretching session to warm your muscles up. If you have specific concerns about bone loss, you will want to make sure you are doing some simple exercises that can build up bone mass in addition to stretching exercises.

Additionally, by stretching regularly, you will build up range of motion in your joints and better muscle flexibility which will help you more easily do the exercises that you need to do to improve your bone health. As your muscles move and get stronger during exercise, your bones will regain the bone density that was lost as you got older.

## Joints and Stretching

Stretching can help make your joints more flexible, which is important for aging bodies since joints tend to get stiffer with age and lose flexibility. With greater flexibility, you have better range of motion. This can help eliminate movements that were previously painful, including a number of types of exercise along with daily activities.

Another benefit stretching provides in the joints is the stretching of tendons. Tendons connect your muscles to your bones and can get stiff and shorten over time if they are not used. The best way to loosen and lengthen your tendons to get your joints moving well again is by regularly stretching.

The other part of joints are the ligaments that hold bones together. These are supposed to be tough and not very flexible because they provide stability in the joint. However, with age, they can become too stiff, so stretching will help to get them back to where they're supposed to be so rather than restricting your movements, they stabilize your joints and allow you to move freely.

## **Other Health Benefits to Stretching**

There are so many other health benefits to stretching, such as helping you to relax, improving your posture, increasing endurance and energy levels, promoting blood circulation, and reducing cholesterol. Keep reading through this course to find out more about how to stretch your aging body to improve your health.

## **Chapter 3 – Things to Consider**

### **Before Starting a Stretching Program**

Before you start a stretching program, it's important that you do these things first. Even though it may seem like a simple thing to begin stretching regularly, if you are not properly prepared, you have a much higher risk of injury. Preparation will also help you know exactly what you are getting into so you can stick with the program you decide on.

#### **Talk to Your Doctor**

Talking to your doctor about your current health is the most important thing that you can do before starting a stretching program. They will be able to tell you what areas you need to focus on and how often you should stretch to safely improve your health. If you have problems with your bones or heart, they may also start you on medications or supplements.

## **Find a Trainer**

If you are new to stretching or your doctor recommends that you work with somebody to focus on specific problems, then you will need to find a trainer. For general help with stretching, you may be able to attend classes or find someone through a local gym.

However, if you have physical limitations, you may need to find a physical therapist to help you.

## **Find a Location**

It's best to find a place where you can do your stretching exercises most easily and effectively. You may choose to do this at home, a gym, or your local community center. Since some stretches require some additional equipment, you'll need to make sure you have access to these wherever you are. Many community centers will have small workout centers that are perfect for performing exercises, and they are usually much more affordable than gyms.

## **Get Proper Clothing**

Wearing the right clothing can help you stretch much more easily, but it doesn't have to be anything fancy or too expensive, so don't worry. You simply want to wear clothing that won't restrict your movements in any way. This can be tight-fitting clothes like spandex or yoga pants, but it can also be loose-fitting sweatpants if that's more your style.

## **Get Some Stretching Equipment**

You can do many stretches without equipment, but having some basic pieces of equipment will make some stretches easier and safer for your aging body. Stretch bands or resistance bands are great for making many stretches easier and more intense. An incline board provides you with an angled surface for various leg stretches, and a yoga mat is the best way to cushion your body when doing any stretches from the floor.

There are also a number of different machines designed specifically for stretching. These are a great way to get started because they force you to do the stretch properly which helps prevent injury and improve the effectiveness of the stretch.

Unfortunately, these are generally fairly expensive, so if you can find a gym that has them, that is generally a better option.

Once you have everything ready, the only thing left to do is keep reading to learn more about stretching and get started with stretching every day.

# Chapter 4 – Types Of Stretches & Timing

In this part of the course, we're going to go into the different types of stretches that are done, and which type of stretching will be best for you and your aging body. We'll also talk about why timing stretches is important and discuss how much time you should be taking for each stretch.

## **Ballistic Stretching**

If you've ever seen anyone bouncing while stretching, this is ballistic stretching. The idea is that it uses the momentum of your movement to push a joint beyond its normal range of motion. This is one type that you should avoid at all costs as it can often cause your muscles to get tighter or cause injury.

## **Active Stretching**

Often used in yoga, this involves bringing your limb into position without any help from props or other limbs and allowing only the

muscles in that limb to hold the stretch. This can be extremely difficult which is why it's rarely held for more than 10 seconds at a time, but it's also great for building muscle.

## **Passive Stretching**

Like active stretching, passive stretching has you assuming and maintaining a position. However, these stretches are held for a much longer period of time (1 minute or more) because they use props which allow you to maintain the stretch. These are great for injuries as they don't work the muscles too hard.

## **Isometric Stretching**

This type of stretching involves using your own strength to push past the passive stretch. You assume a position and then push against the prop (or your trainer in some cases) to create a deeper stretch on those muscles which is a great way to engage more of your muscle fibers than passive stretching alone.

## **Dynamic Stretching**

This is another type of stretching that involves movement, but is safe and beneficial. With dynamic stretching, you perform sets of specific leg and arm movements that allow your joints to gently and naturally extend beyond their previous limits, exercising them and flexing the muscles at the same time.

## **PNF Stretching**

PNF stands for proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation, and it is essentially uses a combination of passive and isometric stretches to provide even better results than one of these techniques alone. Because of the combination of stretches, this is the fastest way to improve flexibility through stretching.

## Timing of Stretches

As we mentioned before, different stretches are held for different amounts of time. This is sometimes related to the difficulty of the stretch as with active and dynamic stretches, but the effectiveness of the stretch is also a factor. Although an active stretch may only require 10 seconds to be effective, doing a passive stretch for the same amount of time would not produce any results.

Since most passive and isometric stretches require at least one minute for each of the major muscles, you'll need to make sure that you give yourself plenty of time for each stretching session. Allowing your muscles to stretch for at least a minute each gives them a chance to gradually stretch out and maintain that position for long enough to impact that muscle for more than a couple minutes after your session

# Chapter 5 - Popular Stretch Training Programs & Their Effectiveness

When it comes to stretch training, there are two types of programs that are most popular: yoga and Pilates. But before you sign up for the next class being offered in your area, we're going to discuss what exactly these stretch training programs are and help you determine how effective they are for you and your aging body.

## What is Yoga?

Yoga originated as a spiritual discipline developed by Hindus to combine breathing control, meditation, and different body poses to make spiritual connections. Now, you can find many people who focus only on the health benefits of yoga, which uses both active and passive stretches.

## **What are the Advantages of Yoga?**

Some of the advantages to doing yoga regularly include increased strength and flexibility, improved blood flow, can be used as physical therapy for specific problems, and stress relief. Although there are certainly some difficult poses, an experienced instructor can help you perform modified versions of these or help you find poses that you can do that give you the same stretch.

## **What are the Disadvantages of Yoga?**

First of all, Bikram or Hot Yoga is something you should avoid because there is evidence that this can be dangerous to your health. But beyond that, the biggest disadvantage to yoga is getting a teacher that pushes you too hard which can cause you to injure yourself while trying something you shouldn't have been doing in the first place.

Bottom line: Yoga is a great way to improve strength and flexibility, but you need to make sure you have a good instructor who will help you accomplish your goals and won't put your aging body at risk of injury.

## **What is Pilates?**

Pilates is a type of exercise that incorporates a mixture of floor exercises and use of specialized machines to improve strength and flexibility. It especially focuses on strengthening your core muscles, and primarily uses dynamic and isotonic stretches along with various exercises.

## **What are the Advantages of Pilates?**

Pilates is good for the aging body because it strengthens the muscles, especially the core which leads to better posture, improves balance, and increases flexibility and range of motion. It can also be easier for beginners and can be easily customized to help target rehabilitating specific injuries.

## **What are the Disadvantages of Pilates?**

Some of the disadvantages of Pilates are that they won't help with weight loss, the movements require a great deal of concentration to perform correctly, progress is difficult to track which makes it hard to know how far you've come, and if you do have a specific issue, it can be hard to get the individual attention you need in a classroom setting.

Bottom line: Pilates can be a great way to become more flexible and to increase your physical strength, but for people with physical limitations, it may be hard to find an ideal setting in which their concerns can be properly addressed.

Final word: Both yoga and Pilates can be useful as a stretch training program for the aging body, but not every person can walk into any yoga or Pilates class, so take your time and find the right one for you if you decide to go one of these routes.

# **Chapter 6 – Common Stumbling Blocks to Stretch Training & Dangers to be Aware Of**

There are a number of stumbling blocks that can keep people from stretch training as well as a few dangers that you need to be aware of before you begin. First we're going to look at some of the things that may be keeping you from doing stretch training and show you some simple ways to overcome them.

## **Lack of Time**

Many people feel that they simply don't have time to do stretch workouts because it does take a while to make sure all of your muscles have been properly stretched. However, if you take a closer look at your schedule, you may find some huge chunks of time while watching TV. Combine this time with your stretch training and you won't get bored during the stretching and can use your TV time wisely.

## **Movement is Painful**

It can be hard to want to stretch your muscles and move your joints when they hurt, so keep in mind that what you're doing will help eliminate this pain over time. You can also modify most stretches so that they're not painful but are still effective. When you're first starting, be sure not to overdo it. Take things slow and move forward at your own pace.

## **Lack of Energy**

We totally understand that your aging body doesn't have as much energy as it used to, but don't let that stop you from doing what's best for your body. Stretch training is easy on your body and can actually make you feel more energized as it improves blood circulation which can help you feel more alert and awake.

Now, let's look at some of the dangers of stretch training that you need to be aware of.

## **Not Warming Up**

Imagine your muscles like rubberbands. If you try to stretch them when they're cold, they're likely to tear or even snap in two. But if you warm them up first, then they're going to be able to stretch farther and won't break. In the same way, if you jump right into passive or isotonic stretches without warming your muscles up first, you could easily damage your muscles.

## **Improper Stretches**

If you move your limb the wrong way during stretch training, you can put too much strain on the joint or the muscle which can lead to an injury. This is why it's best for someone who has never regularly done stretch training to find a trainer or teacher that can help them learn the correct way to stretch in order to avoid this risk.

## **Falling**

This is a common concern with the aging body as falls are more dangerous and more likely as your balance can become impaired with age. Although this is a legitimate danger during stretch

training as some stretches do require balance, there are plenty of things that you can do to minimize this risk such as using a wall or sturdy chair for support, or working with a strong partner that can help you.

# Chapter 7 –Overview of Stretch

## Workouts for Beginners

In this part of the course, we're going to give you an overview of a stretch workout, which has two basic parts: the warmup and the stretching. Although most workouts require a cooldown phase after the main part of your workout, you can skip that with stretch training because it doesn't require working your muscles hard enough that they need to cooldown afterwards.

### Warmup

As mentioned in the last section, stretching your muscles without warming up first can lead to muscle tears and injuries, which is why it's so important to take at least 10 minutes to get your body ready to stretch. Fortunately, warming up is very easy to do, and the physical activity is also great for improving muscle strength and blood circulation.

The easiest warmup for a stretch routine is to walk for 10 minutes. If you are doing your stretch training in your home, you can walk up and down the hallway or even walk in place. Because

you will also be stretching your arm muscles, it's important to move your arms more than you normally would when walking, almost as though you were running in slow motion.

## **Stretch Workout**

During your stretch workout, you will need to work through all the major muscle groups to make sure you cover all of them. To review, the 11 major muscle groups are: forearms, biceps, triceps, shoulders, trapezius, chest, abdominals, back, quadriceps, hamstrings, and calves. Whether you use our stretch routine from the next section or create your own, be sure to cover all of the major muscle groups.

It's also important to use a variety of the types of stretches. Dynamic and active stretches are great for improving muscle strength while stretching which is also good for improving bone mass, so you may want to try these if you have concerns about bone loss. Passive and isotonic stretches are much easier to do and are better for people who are worried about being able to balance.

Be sure to do each stretch for the length of time that is recommended for that stretch. There is a reason that you should do that stretch of that long, and although it probably won't hurt to do it for longer, if you do it for a shorter amount of time, it won't be nearly as effective which means you won't get the results you're looking for.

Another thing to keep in mind during a stretch workout is that stretching should not be painful. You should feel the muscle stretching and may experience some mild discomfort, but if you feel pain in your muscles, this is a sign that you are either doing the stretch improperly or are pushing yourself too far, too fast, and need to work your way up to stretching that far.

## **When to Cool Down**

If you do choose to do dynamic stretching, you may benefit from a light cooldown. This can consist of simply walking for 10 minutes and/or doing a few passive or isotonic stretches to help your muscles fully relax after your stretch routine.

## Chapter 8 – Sample Stretch Workouts

In this section, we're going to give you a list of the best stretches for each of the 11 groups of muscles. You can use these for your stretch workout, or find ones that are easier for you to do for each muscle group. Before you begin, always warmup for at least 10 minutes so your muscles are ready to be stretched. You also want to make sure that you hold each stretch for 30 seconds to 1 minute.

**Forearm** – The best stretches for the forearm are the standing extensor stretch, standing wrist flexor stretch, assisted forearm stretch, and wrist rotations.

**Biceps** – For your biceps, you will want to try the standing biceps stretch, biceps wall stretch, wrist-rotation biceps stretch, doorway biceps stretch, and seated bent-knee biceps stretch.

**Triceps** – To stretch out your triceps, use the overhead triceps stretch and crossbody triceps stretch.

**Shoulder** – To improve flexibility in your shoulders, you'll want to do chin retractions, neck rolls, shoulder rolls, shoulder rotation, and the standing wall stretch.

**Trapezius** – The best stretches to loosed up your trapezius muscles are the forward trapezius stretch, side trapezius stretch, and diagonal trapezius stretch.

**Chest** – To stretch your chest, you'll need to do the wall stretch, elbow wrap stretch, back bend stretch, lying chest stretch, and the standing chest expansion.

**Abdominals** – For your abdominal muscles, you'll want to do the lying abdominal stretch, standing abdominal stretch, and abdominal rotations.

**Back** – To stretch your back muscles, you'll want to try the knee to chest stretch, lying knee twist, piriformis seated stretch, and yoga poses such as the cobra, restful post, and the cat/cow poses.

**Quadriceps** – There are three stretches that are great for the quadriceps: the kneeling quadriceps stretch, standing quadriceps stretch, and ground quadriceps stretch.

**Hamstrings** – Some of the best stretches for the hamstrings are the hamstring slider, hamstring twist, modified hamstring twist, butterfly, open-air stretch, and single-leg circle.

**Calves** – The best muscles for your calves are the standing calf stretch, wall calf stretch, and the downward dog yoga pose.

## **Targeting Muscle Groups**

To target specific muscle groups that are particularly stiff or sore, then you may need to do several sets of the stretches for those muscles. You may also consider holding each stretch for up to 3 minutes each to allow for more of your muscle fibers within that muscle to have time to be stretched out. You can also do these stretching exercises more than once a day to help improve flexibility faster.

## **Targeting Joints**

If you have a particular joint that you want to increase your range of motion in, then you will need to focus on the muscle groups that control that joint. Think about what muscles are on either side of that joint and do more stretches in those muscles. For example, if your knees are a concern, then you will want to stretch your quadriceps, hamstrings, and calves more than other muscles.

# **Chapter 9 - Tools/Resources/Apps to Help with Staying Limber into Older Age**

If you think that staying limber into older age will be difficult, then be sure to make use of these tools, resources, and apps that will help you reach your flexibility goals. Be sure to use the tools that will be most effective for you personally when it comes to stretch training, since not every one of the resources will be best for every person.

## **Foam Roller**

One of the best tools you can buy that will help you with your stretch training is a foam roller. Because it's so effective, it can also be painful, especially when you're first using it. However, if you want good results particularly in your back and calves, this is a great tool to have. To properly learn how to use one and which type is right for you, you may need to hire a personal trainer or attend a foam roller class.

## **Lacrosse Ball**

Another helpful tool you may consider buying is a lacrosse ball. These provide you a way to perform self-massage in the areas you need some extra help, like the neck or back. A lacrosse ball lets you put pressure in a certain spot where you may have connective tissues bunched up in knots. Releasing these knotted fibers will help you feel better and become more mobile quickly.

## **Rope**

We've mentioned using stretch bands before which have some give in them, but you can also use a simple piece of rope or even a towel to help provide resistance for isotonic stretches. Having a couple ropes or towels of different lengths will help you boost the effectiveness of your stretches.

## **Classes**

There are many different classes that you can take that can help by being a local community of like-minded people and by

providing you with a qualified instructor that can teach you how to properly stretch without injuring yourself. Take time to find a class that is perfect for you, and don't be afraid to ask if you can take one class to try it out before committing to more.

## **Personal Trainer/Physical Therapist**

If you have a specific health concern that needs attention, you may need to choose to work one-on-one with a personal trainer or a physical therapist that can make sure the stretches you're doing will actually help you improve rather than making things worse. Your doctor can usually recommend a good physical therapist and many gyms have personal trainers that can help.

## **Apps**

Phone apps are another great way to help you stick to your stretching routine. Some exercise apps will even let you create your own exercise program where you can add stretches and set how long you want to do each one, then let it play. Then, when you're ready to stretch, all you have to do is start the workout and follow along with the directions.

By using a combination of these resources, you can keep yourself on track with your stretch training program and be successful. In the next section, we'll give you even more ideas that you can use to make stretching part of your daily routine.

## **Conclusion – Tips to Add Stretching into Your Daily Life Long-term**

Congratulations on making it to the end of this short, introductory report on simple secrets to staying limber and stable as a senior.

You may be surprised to know that the majority of people who start something never complete it.

Take your time and progress at your own pace. This is not a race. The more you understand and comprehend what is happening when you undertake a stretching & stability course the better your results will be

If you really want to succeed, then everything you do for your body must be with long-term planning in mind. These changes you're making and the diet you're following are not meant to be temporary. They're meant to be part of a new lifestyle that you follow in order to keep off the weight that you lost and help keep you healthy.

Equally as important as doing the stretches properly is doing them every day, which is why in this section, we're going to give you some tips that you can use to add stretching into your daily life so you can stick with it and keep reaping the benefits of a stretch training program.

## **Set a Schedule**

Before you start your stretch training program, you want to determine exactly when you're going to do it. If you're worried you'll get too busy during the day and forget, you may want to do your stretching first thing in the morning. If you know you'll have better luck after lunch or right before bed, then plan on allotting that time to stretch training and don't let anything else interfere with it.

## **Use Family and Friends**

Easily one of the best ways to help keep you on track with your stretch training is to use the people around you. If you can find a stretching partner, it can be a fun way to spend time together and to keep each other accountable to make sure you're stretching as often as you should. It can also be safer to perform these stretches with someone else to help you.

Doing simple things like posting about your workout on Facebook is another way to get great support from your family and friends. If you make a commitment to post about your workout every day

or let one person know when you complete your stretch workout, then you can stay accountable and will get a ton of encouragement to help keep you going.

## **Join an Online Community**

There are tons of online communities that you can join that will help you stay on track with your stretch training. These are also great places to ask questions about what you're doing and get tips on how to get the most out of your stretch training. When looking for a good online community to join, be sure to look at how active and helpful the members are.

## **Post a Calendar**

Having a calendar that you mark on the days that you did your stretch training is a good way to remind yourself that you need to do it every day and a good way to keep yourself accountable. You can mark days simply by putting a big happy face on the calendar when you're done for the day, or have fun with it by buying colorful stickers to mark the days.

## **Reward Yourself**

Rewarding yourself is a great way to use simple positive reinforcement to keep yourself on track. It could be that you give yourself a small healthy treat at the end of each training session, or that you allow yourself to buy something special at the end of a week that you went every day training. Be sure that whatever you choose as your reward, it is something that isn't going to hurt your health.

By making stretch training a priority, you will see the positive results from it that you're looking fo

# **Bonus Chapter – Advanced Stretch Workouts**

Once you've mastered the basics of the passive stretches we listed before, you'll want to begin to move on to more advanced stretch workouts. Advanced stretch workouts will allow you to go beyond where you are now and help you push yourself to be even more flexible. Be sure to add advanced stretches to your routine slowly so you don't injure yourself.

## **Yoga Poses**

There are a number of yoga poses that should only be done by someone who has completely mastered the basics of stretching. If you are taking yoga classes as your main form of stretch training, you should always start in a beginner class or one designed specifically for the aging body. Your teacher can tell you when you are ready to try a more advanced class.

## **Pilates**

Because Pilates involves a number of movements in addition to stretches, it's not for everyone, but it is great for building strength in muscles along with flexibility. Many Pilates moves can be done at home with nothing but a yoga mat, but there are many others that require specialized equipment. Fortunately, you can find Pilates classes that has what you need: special equipment and qualified instructors.

## **Active Stretching**

Rather than doing only passive stretching, you'll want to add active stretching to your repertoire. These stretches are much more difficult because you have to use the muscle to hold your limb in position. This is what makes them ideal for building strength alongside flexibility. Because active stretching uses the muscles, you will probably need to cool down after a stretching session with some light walking.

## **Dynamic Stretching**

If you have problems with balance, be very cautious when doing dynamic stretching as it involves a lot of movement, usually one leg at a time. Although you should be using a wall or sturdy chair for support, these may be difficult for people with balance problems. However, if you can add these to your routine, dynamic stretches are great for improving flexibility and muscle strength at the same time.

## **Using Tools**

We've mentioned a few simple tools throughout the course that you can use to improve your stretch training. To review, we've talked about stretch or resistance bands, incline boards, yoga mats, stretch machines, foam rollers, lacrosse balls, and a rope or towel. All of these things are designed to help you stretch better.

You will likely want to only add one or two of these things at a time, so look into each stretch training tool to see what would work best for you as far as targeting specific problems or

muscle groups. Then, once you've mastered the use of one tool, you can add another one until you have everything you feel you need for your stretch training needs.

Thank you for taking the time to read this course on stretching for the aging body. We hope that we have provided you with all the information you need to be able to stay limber even as time seems to be working against you. By being consistent and using all of your resources wisely, you can keep your muscles and joints limber no matter how old you are.