

WARM UP & STRETCH FOR HEALTH WORKERS



ACCESS HOME HEALTH

Support Worker

This resource contains important information for your workplace. Keep a copy handy.

You can also go to www.acc.co.nz/smarttips to customise sport specific information.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXERCISES

- › Stop every hour and do an exercise that makes your body move in the opposite direction to which you have been working
- › Try to do all the stretches at least once a day
- › Stretches should be done 2-3 times each side
- › Hold stretches for 10-15 seconds (unless indicated otherwise)
- › Breathe out slowly as you stretch
- › Make sure you feel the stretch only in the specified areas
- › Only hold stretches that feel good
- › Let go of stretches gently.

WARM-UP/COOL DOWN

- › If your work is very strenuous, start work gently and build up (to allow a warm-up period)
- › If this is not possible, start with a few minutes of light aerobic activity to warm the body up before commencing work
- › If your work is very strenuous at the end of the work day, cool down with some light aerobic exercise and static stretches.

SEMI SQUAT



- › Stand with feet hip-width apart, shoulders relaxed.
- › Bend your knees keeping head up, bottom out.
- › Aim to keep knees over your toes.
- › Hold position for 3-5 seconds, repeat 10 times.

FORWARD TO BACK WEIGHT TRANSFER



- › Stand with one foot in front of the other.
- › Keep upper body upright, relaxed to move freely.
- › Move weight from front to back foot 10 times.

HIP FLEXOR STRETCH



- › Kneel with legs hip-width apart and one leg out in front.
- › Move weight onto front leg, keep head up.
- › To increase the stretch move front foot further forward.

SIDE TO SIDE WEIGHT TRANSFER



- › Stand with feet hip-width apart, knees comfortably bent.
- › Upper body upright, relaxed and moving freely.
- › Move weight from one foot to the other 10 times.

SHOULDER SHRUGS



- › Stand or sit tall, raise shoulders up towards ears.
- › Push shoulders down, reaching fingers towards the floor.

FRONT THIGH STRETCH



- › Using support, stand tall on one leg.
- › Keep knees side-by-side, bring heel towards your buttock to stretch front of the thigh.
- › Try to keep your back straight.

HAMSTRING STRETCH



- › Stand tall with one heel on a stable raised surface, keep both knees slightly bent.
- › Bend forwards gently.
- › Keep head up and bottom out/back.

CHEST STRETCH



- › Stand tall, chin in, interlink hands behind back.
- › Draw shoulder blades down and back.
- › Keep hands clasped, lift arms away from the body to stretch the chest.

TRUNK STRETCH



- › Stand tall with feet hip-width apart.
- › Reach for the ceiling, clasp wrist with the opposite hand and stretch up.
- › Breathe in then as you breathe out lean sideways towards the bent arm.

TIPS FOR HEALTH WORKERS



ACCESS HOME HEALTH LTD

Support worker

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GET A GREAT NIGHT'S SLEEP

- › Try to get 8 hours sleep per night. Sleep-debt stresses your body and mind
- › Find positive ways to deal with stress at work and home. Reducing stress helps you sleep better
- › Exercise during the day
- › Healthy foods provide energy to function and sleep well
- › Avoid caffeine for at least 3 hours before sleep
- › Alcohol reduces sleep quality. If you drink in the evening, do so in moderation
- › Wind down in the evening and relax for half an hour before bed
- › Make sure you have a very dark room and comfortable bed.

EAT WELL

- › Healthy foods provide energy to function and nutrients to help you stay well
- › Eat five servings of fruit and vegetables per day
- › Eat 'good' fats in foods like nuts, seeds, avocados, vegetable oil, salmon. Reduce 'bad' fats by eating lean meat, reduced-fat dairy products, and fewer fried foods and pies
- › Replace sweet snacks with fresh fruit, low sugar muesli bars and nuts, or a sandwich
- › Try having less salt with your food
- › Drink at least 1.5-2 litres of water per day
- › Take lunch breaks away from your work area. Your digestion works best when you are relaxed.

COPE EFFECTIVELY WITH STRESS

- › Find positive ways to deal with stress at work and home
- › Face up to the big issues, e.g. family/relationship, financial and health. Get professional help/counselling if you need it
- › Stay positive. Managing a stressful situation well can make you feel good
- › If your work is stressful, tell your boss
- › Healthy food, plenty of sleep and exercise are vital
- › Alcohol and tobacco reduce your ability to cope with stress
- › Allow yourself time to relax and recover from stress. Schedule fun times!

SERIOUS HARM DEFINITION

- › Any condition that amounts to or results in permanent loss of bodily function or temporary severe loss of bodily function
- › Amputation of body part
- › Burns requiring referral to specialist
- › Loss of consciousness from lack of oxygen
- › Loss of consciousness or acute illness from absorption, inhalation or ingestion of any substance
- › Any harm that causes the person harmed to be hospitalised for a period of 48 hours or more commencing within 7 days of the harm's occurrence.

STAY FIT

- › 30 minutes exercise a day helps keep you well
- › Being healthy and physically flexible helps keep you safe at work
- › Keep moving. Use the steps not the lift. Park your car 10 minutes from work and walk. Cycle to work. Take a walk at lunch time
- › Start exercising with a friend
- › When you start exercising, start slowly. Gradually increase activity as you get used to it
- › Make your exercise as fun and playful as possible
- › Have regular health checks.

SUSTAINING A HEALTHY WORK LIFE

- › Sleeping Well, Eating Well and Exercise are three keys!
- › Try to get 8 hours sleep per night. Sleep-debt stresses your body and mind
- › Healthy foods provide energy to function and nutrients to help you stay well
- › 30 minutes exercise a day helps keep you well
- › Drink at least 1.5-2 litres of water per day
- › Take positive action to address both work and non-work stress: talk issues through, take breaks, eat away from your work area, work well for the required hours, then go and 'play'.

SIGNS OF FATIGUE

WATCH OUT FOR:

- › Yawning or statements of feeling drowsy
- › Impatience and slow reaction times
- › Sore or heavy eyes
- › Sweaty hands, hunger, thirst or cramp
- › Humming in the ears
- › Not remembering the last few tasks
- › Lapses in attention or reduction in performance.
- › Working two or more jobs can impact on a person by increasing the risk of pain and injury and decreasing the time available for recovery. It is essential that rest is taken.

FIRST AID

USE R.I.C.E.D. (FIRST TWO DAYS)

- REST:** To limit further damage, avoid moving the injured part as much as possible.
- ICE:** Put ice in a damp towel and place on the injured part for 20 minutes, every two hours for the first 48 hours.
- COMPRESSION:** Bandage between ice treatments.
- ELEVATION:** Keep the injured area raised as much as possible.
- DIAGNOSIS:** If the pain or swelling hasn't gone down significantly after 48 hours, seek professional medical help.

AVOID H.A.R.M. (FIRST THREE DAYS)

- HEAT:** Avoid hot baths and showers, saunas, hot water bottles, heat packs and liniments.
- ALCOHOL:** Alcohol increases bleeding and swelling at the injury site and delays healing.
- RUNNING:** You should not exercise the injured part for 72 hours unless approved by a medical professional.
- MASSAGE:** Massaging an injury in the first 72 hours can slow down recovery.

RED FLAGS

SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE IF YOU HAVE:

- › Severe, unremitting night-time pain
- › Severe burning pain with associated pins and needles
- › Significant loss of weight over a period of weeks to months
- › Significant trauma (e.g. fall from a height, motor vehicle accident, crush, etc.)
- › Feeling systematically unwell – e.g. with fevers, night sweats, flu-like symptoms
- › Obvious swelling or lump/s
- › Redness – especially around joint/s
- › Several different joints being affected at the same time
- › Skin rash associated with joint pains
- › Significant visible bruising in the affected area
- › Paralysis or significant loss of function of the limb or part of the limb.