

Importance of Stretching

After those mandatory, and somewhat annoying morning stretches in the 7th grade, most of us have not looked back to giving our limbs some freedom. And although some of us make out the time for cross fit workouts, we often skip the easy part, stretching. Whereas it is one of the simplest and easiest ways to get your body moving without doing much, and the benefits you reap last for long times to come.

ESSENTIAL, NOT USEFUL

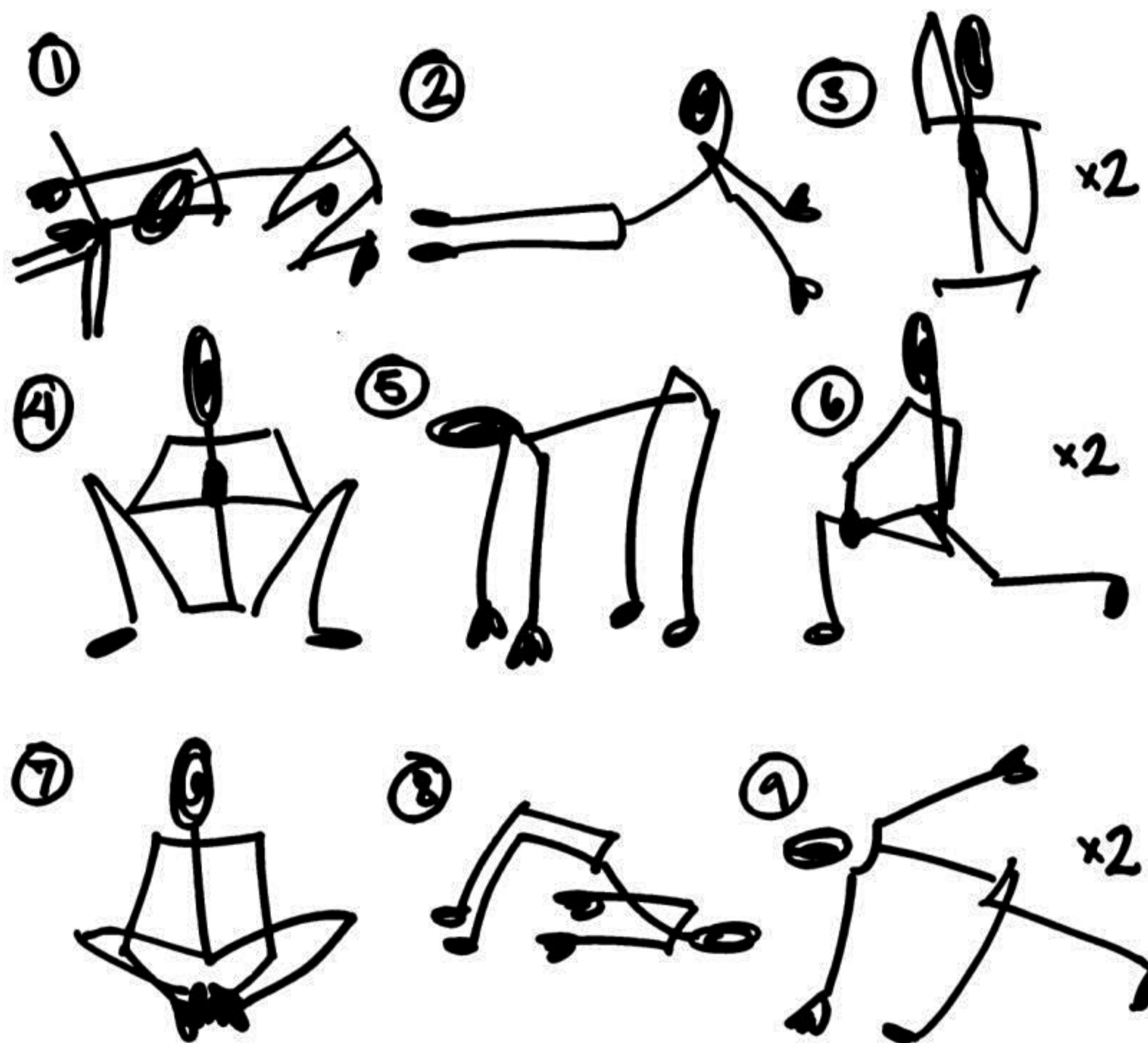
If you have ever heard that it is useful to stretch before a rigorous workout, it is partially wrong, as it is absolutely essential that you do so. Not stretching before going into cardio or weights will be harder on your muscles, and you will feel less flexible around the joints. Hence it is always best to simply stretch a little before moving forward with the rest of your workout routine.

BETTER POSTURE

Simply sitting straight up does not ensure a strict posture, but becomes forceful after a while. Regular stretching can prevent this by loosening up the muscles and can give you those open shoulders naturally.

GOODBYE BACK PAIN

Back pain is a common problem amongst numerous people, and that is surprisingly not limited to the older generation. These pains surface from taut hamstrings which puts stress around the muscles on our spine and lower back. While simple stretches can prevent such cases from ever occurring, the right stretches can also get rid of these. For chronic back pain, consult a physician to know the correct mechanisms before starting, as the wrong ones can



do more harm than good.

PRE-WORK OUT

If you have ever went on to exercise without stretching first, you will know how horrible this feels. Your muscles feel tight and sore, and the body does not want to cooperate. In rare cases, injuries can also occur from exercising

without stretching your muscles first. Take a few minutes to loosen up those muscles, it will correct muscular imbalances, and will improve your overall routine and performance.

FLEXIBLE JOINTS

Stretching acts like a sort of a lubricant for your joints. And as much as it helps the mus-

cles, it is way more helpful for what joins them together. Correct movements can add flexibility to the tendons so sudden movements will not be tough anymore.

FOR RELAXATION

Ever wondered why working out makes you feel better? Not just physically, but mentally too. Giving your arms and legs some movement increases the blood flow which gets rid of muscle tension and helps you relax. And stretching works just as well for this as would any rigorous exercise.

A GOODNIGHT'S SLEEP

Is this not something we all crave in our busy schedules and insomniac nights? Giving those stiff and unworked muscles some whiff of movement can release tension and help bring a good night's sleep. Not getting muscle cramps is an added bonus.

Have some fun; who says stretching needs to be boring? Get out, feel the fresh air, and stretch beside a lake, or under a shaded tree. Bring along a friend, so you are both more motivated.

Busy schedules are inevitable, but with lazy limbs so is joint pain. Spend that extra few minutes, get your joints moving, stretch a little, your body will thank you.

*Stretching will not give you muscles equivalent to those people get from strength training, but it will still make your arms and legs stronger than they used to be.

*Stretching on a regular basis can help prevent injuries from small accidents.

By Anisha Hassan

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