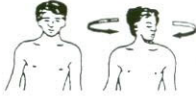


Stretching and Strengthening Activities

The following stretches and exercises are designed to increase the strength, endurance, and flexibility of your muscles. Do these stretches and exercises on a regular basis to prevent and/or reduce WMSD.

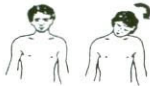
Looking Over Your Shoulder...

- Seated or standing hold your head straight and face forward.
- Turn your head and look over your shoulder as far as possible, without pain.
- Make sure your neck is straight.
- Keep your shoulder blades together.
- Hold, rest, then repeat.



Side Bending (Trapezius Stretch)...

- Seated or standing hold your head straight and face forward.
- Bring your ear down toward your shoulder as far as possible, without pain.
- Make sure your neck is straight.
- Keep your shoulder blades together.
- You can hold onto the side of the chair opposite to the direction in which you are bending your head for a better stretch.
- Hold, rest, then repeat.



Chin Tucks...

- In either a seated or standing position, hold your head and neck straight and look forward.
- Keep your shoulder blades together.
- Bring your chin down toward your chest.
- Hold, rest, then repeat.



Head Pushes...

- Lay down on your back with your knees bent, your back flat, and your head and neck resting straight on a pillow.
- Push your head straight back into the pillow.
- Hold, rest, then repeat.



How to Stretch and Strengthen Muscles Safely....

- Stretching** (THINK CALM! 2-5 repetitions)
- Stretch out to a point where you feel tightness (BUT NO PAIN!!).
 - Hold the position for 20-30 seconds and BREATHE!!!
 - As your muscles relax, stretch further, but NO PAIN!!...and NO BOUNCING!!!
 - Stretch out *before* and *after* exercise and work.

- Strengthening** (THINK REPETITIONS – start with 10 and increase as the muscles get stronger).
- More repetitions and less weight is safer.
 - Stop BEFORE you feel pain or are tired.
 - Check yourself for correct body positioning.

Things You Can Do to Relieve Your WMSD....

- If you feel pain or discomfort, STOP!!!
- Rest, drink water, sleep, eat healthy foods.
- Gently massage, stretch and strengthen the injured muscles, but STOP BEFORE it is painful or too uncomfortable.
- Take anti-inflammatory medications (e.g., Tylenol, ibuprofen: 1-2 tablets three times a day – read the medication instructions before taking!).
- Use ice or frozen vegetables to reduce swelling and inflammation (no more than 20 minutes).
- Warm up muscles with light activity prior to stretching/strengthening to prevent injury.
- Try to regain your normal range of movement and activity level.

Work Factors that Can Put you at Risk for WMSD....

- Doing the same activity frequently and repeatedly throughout the day.
- Repeatedly bending, stooping, twisting, turning and lifting, especially overhead.
- Unsafe work behaviors or incorrect use of equipment.
- Exercise (e.g. play sports, work out, walk or jog, lift weights, etc.) and stay in shape.
- Keep your skin well moisturized and free of cracks and calluses.

Personal Factors that Can Put you at Risk for WMSD....

- Not drinking enough water and staying sufficiently hydrated.
- Not getting enough rest or sleep.
- Poor or inadequate nutrition.
- Medications, illness, pain, depression.
- Tight, inflexible muscles.

How to Prevent Work Related Musculoskeletal Discomfort (WMSD)....

- If possible, do a variety of job tasks.
- Change hands and/or work positions.
- Maintain physical flexibility and stretch out before and after work.
- Exercise (e.g. play sports, work out, walk or jog, lift weights, etc.) and stay in shape.
- Keep your skin well moisturized and free of cracks and calluses.
- Eat plenty of fish, meat, fruits, vegetables, and avoid sugar and white flour.
- Drink plenty of water and avoid alcohol, coffee, tea and soft drinks because they dehydrate you.
- Get plenty of rest and sleep.

Where to Go for Help to Address Your WMSD....

- Talk with your wife/significant other, co-workers, friends, or boss/supervisor.
- Talk with your local pharmacist.
- Talk with a physician, nurse, or physical therapist.
- Visit a community health clinic or hospital.
- If it is an emergency, dial 911 or go to the local hospital emergency room or urgent care center.
- Talk with members of your religious community.



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Are You or Someone You Know Experiencing Pain/Discomfort from Working, Especially in Agriculture, and Would like to Understand....

Why you are experiencing pain/discomfort?
How you can prevent it from occurring?
What you can do to relieve it?

...here are some helpful tips...



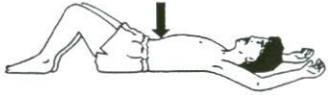
Shoulder Blade Squeezes...

- Lie down with your back flat, your knees bent, and head and neck straight, facing the ceiling.
- Bend your elbows and bring your arms away from your body, even with your shoulders.
- With your hands pointing toward the ceiling, squeeze your shoulder blades together.
- Squeeze without moving your arms or arching your back.
- Hold the squeeze, rest 1-2 seconds, repeat.



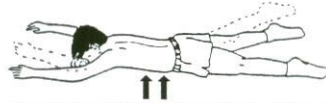
Back and Trunk Strengthening Exercises...

- Lie down with your back flat, your knees bent, and head and neck straight, facing forward, with your arms at your side.
- Pull your navel into your spine and roll your hips toward your head, hold 3-5 seconds, rest, repeat.
- As you gain trunk control, add other movements: e.g., the arms can be raised overhead either one at a time or together; you can march with your feet; lift the hips toward the ceiling, etc.



Prone Extension Exercises...

- Position yourself face down on your stomach with your arms stretched out over your head. Pull your navel into your spine to keep the back flat, NOT arched.
- Lift one leg toward the ceiling keeping the knee straight.
- Hold, rest for 1-2 seconds, repeat with the opposite leg.



Repeat the same movement with the arms, raising one arm at a time.

- As you gain strength and control of the arm and leg exercises, progress to raising the right leg and the left arm at the same time. Hold for 3-5 seconds, rest, then repeat with the left leg and right arm.

Stretch for the Hip Flexors and Chest Area...

- Position yourself face down on your stomach with your arms stretched out over your head.
- Pull your navel into your spine to keep the back flat, NOT arched.
- Bend your elbows prop yourself up on your forearms.
- Hold, rest, then repeat.



Hamstring Stretch ("Door Frame" Stretch)...

- Position yourself in an open doorway as shown in the picture: knee of the leg in the doorway bent, the other leg supported against the wall with toes pointed toward your body.
- Keep the back flat, head, and neck straight, and control the trunk by pulling your navel into your spine. DO NOT arch your back!
- Move closer to the wall as the hamstrings become more flexible. NO PAIN. Hold the stretch for 1 minute, BREATHE and allow the muscle time to relax. Rest, repeat 2-3 times then switch legs.
- To stretch the outside and inside leg muscles, the leg against the wall can be turned with the foot pointing inward or outward (MAKE SURE TO TURN THE LEG AT THE HIP, NOT THE ANKLE!).



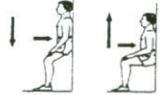
Total Body Stretch with a Twist...

- Lie on your side with your hip and knee bent to a 90 degree angle.
- Take your top leg and bend it back behind you.
- USE YOUR LOWER ABDOMINALS TO KEEP YOUR BACK STRAIGHT...pull your navel into your back!
- Adjust the intensity of the stretch by straightening or bending your top knee.
- Take your top arm, reach overhead, and lie down on it with your palm down.
- Hold, rest, repeat.



Squats for Trunk and Leg Strengthening...

- Position yourself against a wall with your feet apart to shoulder width (move away from wall with increased strength and control of lower abdominal muscles).
- Bend your knees and lean back against the wall.
- Use your lower abdominal muscles to keep your back straight (i.e., pull your belly button into your back.).
- Slowly move up and down by bending and straightening your knees and hips.



Shoulder/Arm Stretch (lazy hitchhiker...)

- Either standing or seated, hold your head erect and look straight ahead.
- Take your arms behind you keeping your elbows straight.
- Turn your outward and down toward the ground.
- Hold, rest, repeat.



Stretching the Shoulder, Arm, Wrist and Hand...

- Keeping your elbow straight, twist your wrist/hand counterclockwise (your thumb ends up pointing down and backwards).
- Enclose your thumb inside your fingers and make a fist.
- Maintaining that position, move your arm backwards until you feel a good stretch, but NO PAIN!!
- Hold, rest, repeat.



Prayer Stretch for Wrists and Fingers...

- Place your palms and fingers together with your elbows and wrists bent to 90 degrees.
- NO PAIN!!
- Rotate your hands clockwise toward your stomach.
- To increase intensity:
 - spread your fingers apart.
 - Move pairs of fingers away from each other.
- Hold, rest, repeat.



Table Stretches for the Forearms and Hands...

- Stand in front of a table.
- Keeping your elbows straight, place both hands with palms down flat on the table, then bend your wrists to the point of tightness, NO PAIN!!
- Start with the thumbs pointing toward your body.
- Change the position of the hands in small increments such that the thumbs end up pointing outward.
- Then, reverse the movement until thumbs are pointing toward your body.
- Hold each position for 10-30 seconds, repeat 2-5 times.
- Move in small increments. BREATHE!!



Stretching the Thumb...

- Using the left hand, push the right thumb down toward the right little finger.
- Be careful to put pressure at the base of the thumb, not at the tip of the thumb.
- Hold, rest, repeat.



Foot Strengthening Exercises...

- Either seated or standing, position your foot on a towel or cloth, and using your toes, crunch up the towel for 1 minute, rest, repeat.
- Progress by picking up marbles, etc.
- Other exercises:
 - Draw circles, letters, etc. with your foot.



Hip Flexor and Calf Muscle Stretch...

- Keep the back flat, head, and neck straight, and control the trunk by pulling your navel into your spine. DO NOT arch your back!
- Position one leg in front with the knee bent.
- Position the other leg behind with the knee straight and **keep the heel on the floor!**
- To increase the stretch, bend the front knee.
- Be sure to keep the trunk straight and your **head behind your knees.**



NOTE: sit-ups and crunches are not included because they can exacerbate neck, shoulder and back problems. A lower abdominal focus is safer and equally, if not more effective.