



# Benefits of Stretching

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<sup>1</sup>Stretching has so many benefits. Just start a program of stretching, and you'll soon notice many of them. Some of the benefits of stretching are—

- relief from pain
- increased energy levels
- increased flexibility
- better range of motion of the joints
- greater circulation of blood to various parts of the body
- relaxation and stress relief
- enhanced muscular coordination
- improved posture
- greater sense of well-being

### **Increased Flexibility and Range of Motion**

As we age, our muscles tighten and we have less range of motion in our joints. Simple activities that we once took for granted, like cutting our toenails, picking things up from the floor or zipping a dress, can all become difficult. A regular stretching program can help lengthen your muscles and make these daily activities easier and more enjoyable.

### **Improved Circulation**

Stretching improves circulation of blood to the muscles and joints. Increased blood circulation, of course, brings nutrients to our cells and removes waste byproducts.

### **Better Posture**

Chronically tense and tight muscles contribute to poor posture, which in turn can affect the functioning of our internal organs, not to mention our appearance. Stretching the muscles of the lower back, shoulders and chest can help keep the back in better alignment and improve posture.

### **Relaxation and Stress Relief**

Stretching, done properly, helps to relax tense muscles which result from stress. The feeling of relaxation brings a sense of well-being and relief from tension.

### **Reduce or Prevent Lower Back Pain**

Greater flexibility and range of motion in the hamstrings and muscles of the hips and pelvis help to reduce the stress on your spine that causes lower back pain.

*What We've Learned from Stretching Experts,  
Jacques Gauthier & Dorothee Lavoie*

We've heard many peoples' stories from stretching expert, Jacques Gauthier when he has taught stretching in our area. In Jacques' experience, the benefits of stretching are often much more far-reaching than those described above. He has known people who have reported great improvement and sometimes complete healing from arthritis, multiple sclerosis, headaches, back/neck/shoulder pain, bursitis, depression, fatigue and even conditions like fibromyalgia.

Jacques feels that the pain relief many people experience with stretching is due to its effect in reducing inflammation. The anti-inflammatory effect of stretching has been demonstrated in a study showing that stretching reduced heel pain in a condition known as plantar fasciitis. (Plantar fasciitis is an inflammatory condition.)

<sup>1</sup><http://heartofhealing.net/relaxation-wellness/stretching/benefits-of-stretching/#sthash.eCA315Zz.dpuf>

