

Achieving Wellness

Victoria Family Chiropractic

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Stretching for Health (Part 2)

Before we continue there are a few important facts you need to know. First, every muscle has an opposing muscle that performs the opposite action. When the agonist muscle (muscle being used) is working the antagonist (opposing muscle) is relaxed by a nerve signal from the brain. Muscle balance is important because if not corrected it gets progressively worse affecting nerve function and posture. To correct this problem vertebral subluxations must be corrected first. This allows vital communication between nerve and muscle. Next, the tight muscles must be lengthened while the weak ones are strengthened.

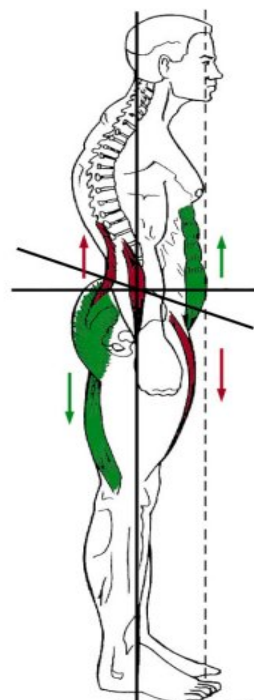
Finally, creating muscle balance takes time and work, so be patient.

The picture below shows what we call “lower cross syndrome.” It is a very common condition where the abdominal and glut. (buttock) muscles are weak and the low back and hip flexors (psoas/rectus femoris) are tight. “Upper cross syndrome” is just as common if not more so. This means that the chest and upper neck muscles under the skull are tight, while the front of the neck and middle back muscles are weak.

Below are tips to stretch effectively.

Stretching Tips

1. Don't stretch first thing in the morning. During this time muscles are tighter to protect inflated spinal discs (our discs swell during sleep because of decreased gravity on them).
 2. As a rule of thumb, try holding stretches for 30 seconds to one minute.
 3. Initially, stretching up to three times/session is beneficial. This can be done up to three times daily but as you become more flexible you wont need to stretch as much.
 4. Feel your muscles stretching and use this as a guide. Do not push yourself into pain but you should feel a stretch. Remember, stretching is gentle and lengthening muscles takes time.
 5. Breath! Gently fill your lower abdomen with air and slowly exhale through your mouth. As you exhale, stretch farther.
 6. Research has shown that stretching is most effective when warm. For example, stretching after sports is better than before. And stretching prior to athletics may actually decrease your performance. Instead warm up with 50% effort and stretch after.
 7. Follow your prescribed stretches to enhance your healing.
- Next week, we will talk about the “cat stretch” and steps to safe gardening for your spine and nervous system.



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HEALTH
IS NOT A
CHANCE,
IT'S A
CHOICE



Our mission is to educate that a properly functioning nervous system and healthy lifestyle are vital to achieving wellness. Encourage someone you care about to get their spines checked today!