

## Standing Calf Stretch

- Put your hands flat on the wall and step your right leg behind you and keep it straight.
- Put your left leg in front of you and bend your knee slightly.
- Stand up tall and keep your right heel pressed onto the floor.



## Seated Wide Leg Stretch

- Sit on a folded blanket on the floor with your legs apart and your toes pointed to the ceiling.
- Sit up tall and begin to slowly lean forward until you feel a gentle stretch.
- Keep your back straight and your hands out in front of you.



## Standing Hamstring Stretch

- Put your hands flat on the wall and step your right leg behind and your left leg in front of you.
- Stand tall, keep both legs straight, and slowly start to lean forward into the stretch. Try to keep both hips facing forward.



## Seated Butterfly Stretch

- Sit on the floor, bend your legs and bring the soles of your feet together.
- Pull your feet as close as you can to your body.
- Sit up tall and lean forward until you feel a gentle stretch.
- If you can, gently press down on your legs with your elbows.



## Exercise Basics

So, you don't have time for an hour-long aerobics class? You can't squeeze in 30 to 40 minutes on the treadmill? That's ok. Recent research has shown that getting the exercise our bodies need is a lot easier and quicker than we once thought.

### Looking at Exercise in a New Way

#### Take It Easy

Many experts now say that moderate exercise can benefit you as much as intense exercise.

### Get Your Exercise Bit by Bit

Research has shown that you don't have to fit your daily exercise into once session. Instead, you can split your workout into short sessions spread out throughout the day.

### The Three-Part Exercise Program

To be complete, your exercise program should combine the three types of of exercise discussed below.

- 1 Aerobic**  
(at least 150 minutes per week)
- 2 Muscle Strengthening**  
(2 days a week)
- 3 Stretching**  
(5-10 minutes a day)

[www.cabarrushealth.org/EIM](http://www.cabarrushealth.org/EIM)



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# Exercise is Medicine

## Stretching During Pregnancy

Patient Name:

Date of Prescription:



Learn more about the health benefits of exercise at:

[www.cabarrushealth.org/EIM](http://www.cabarrushealth.org/EIM)

# Stretching Essentials

Before you begin, make sure you can do it safely and effectively. While you can stretch anytime, anywhere - in your home, at work, in a hotel room or at the park - you want to be sure to use proper technique. Stretching incorrectly can actually do more harm than good.

## 1 Hold your stretch

Hold each stretch for about 30 seconds; in problem areas you may need to hold for around 60 seconds. Breathe normally as you stretch.

## 2 Don't bounce

Stretch in a smooth movement, without bouncing. Bouncing as you stretch can cause injury to your muscle. Most women's joints are looser during pregnancy. Be careful not to stretch too much. Avoid jerky, bouncy, or high-impaction motions. These may increase your risk of injury.

## 3 Don't aim for pain

Expect to feel tension while you're stretching, not pain. If it hurts, you've pushed too far. Back off to the point where you don't feel any pain, then hold the stretch.

## 4 Be Consistent

Stretching can be time-consuming. But you can achieve the most benefits by stretching at least two to three times a week. By not stretching regularly you risk losing any benefits that stretching offered. For instance, if stretching helped you increase your range of motion, and you stop stretching, your range of motion may decrease again.

# Stretching Exercises

Stretching can help improve flexibility and range of motion in your joints. Better flexibility may make activities of daily living such as bending down and climbing stairs easier and can decrease your risk of injury. Stretching also increases blood flow to the muscles and can minimize aches and pains associated with the changes that take place during pregnancy.



Unless other wise noted, hold each stretch for 30 seconds and repeat on the other side.

## Cat Stretch

- Start on your hands and knees with your head in line with your back.
- Pull in your stomach, rounding your back slightly; hold for 1-2 seconds.
- Release and relax your stomach and back, keeping your back as flat as possible. Don't let your back sag.
- Gradually work up to 10 repetitions.



## Full Body Stretch

**(Do not attempt this stretch if you have knee issues)**

- Start in a kneeling position and point your knees out to the sides.
- Slowly lower your body back toward your heels and reach your arms out in front of you.
- Let your stomach lower toward the ground resting between your thighs and rest your forehead on the mat.

NOTE: If you have trouble lowering your hips back toward your heels, try placing a folded up blanket on top of your legs for support. Fold the blanket as much as you need to until your lower body can rest on top of it.



## Low Squat Stretch

- Start from a kneeling position with hands and knees on the floor.
- Push up onto your toes moving into a deep squat position, slowly lowering your heels to the ground.
- If your heels do not press back to the ground, consider putting a folded blanket under them.
- Bring your hands together and gently press your elbows into your inner thighs.



## Should I Warm-Up?

You do not have to warm-up before you stretch, but if you do, you may see yourself stretch a little further than you would without warming up. To warm-up, go for a 5-10 minute walk or march in place for 2 minutes. For more ways to warm-up visit [www.cabarrushealth.org/EIM](http://www.cabarrushealth.org/EIM).



# Because your habits... will be theirs.

Exercising during your pregnancy will help nurture a healthy and happy baby. Ready. Set. Glow.