

34 Pictures That Show You Exactly What Muscles You're Stretching

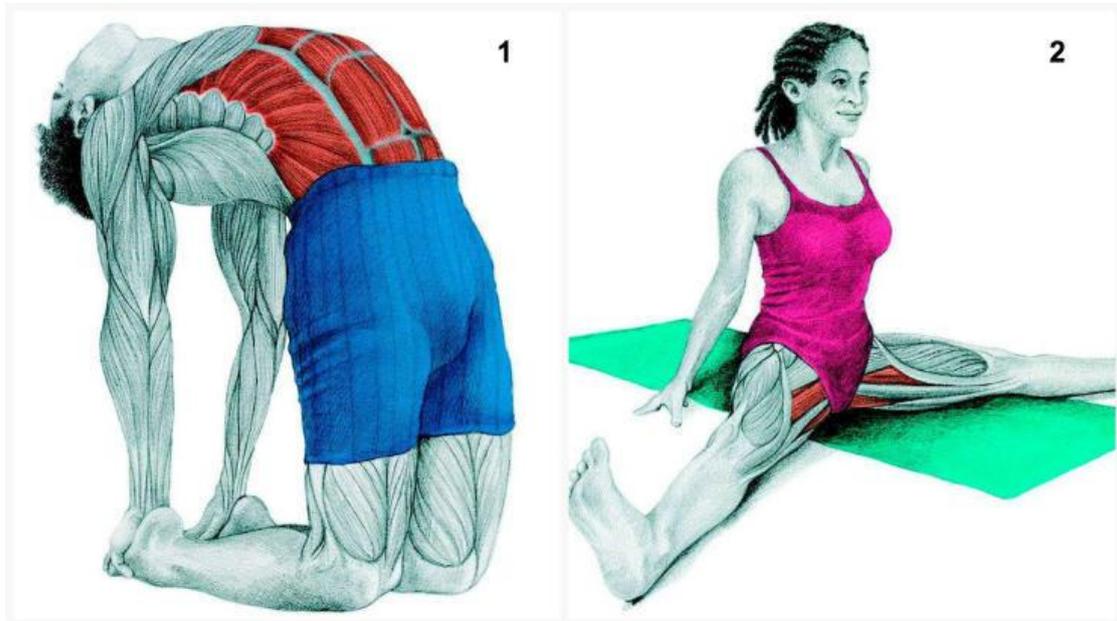
By DailyHealthPost January 27, 2016

Stretching before and after a workout is a great way to promote blood flow to the muscles and increase flexibility. But do you know what muscles you're stretching?

Stretching may help you improve the range of motion of your joints, which in turn may help improve your athletic performance and decrease your risk of injury (1).

Although you may feel a slight burn in your muscles as you stretch them, you may not know exactly what muscles the stretch is actually affecting.

These 34 pictures made by Vicky Timon, a yoga expert and author of "Encyclopedia of Pilates Exercises," and James Kilgallon, CSCS, creator of Mazio's Body Maintenance Program will give you a better sense of how your body actually responds to your favourite stretches.



1. Camel Pose

Muscles emphasized: Rectus Abdominus and External Obliques.

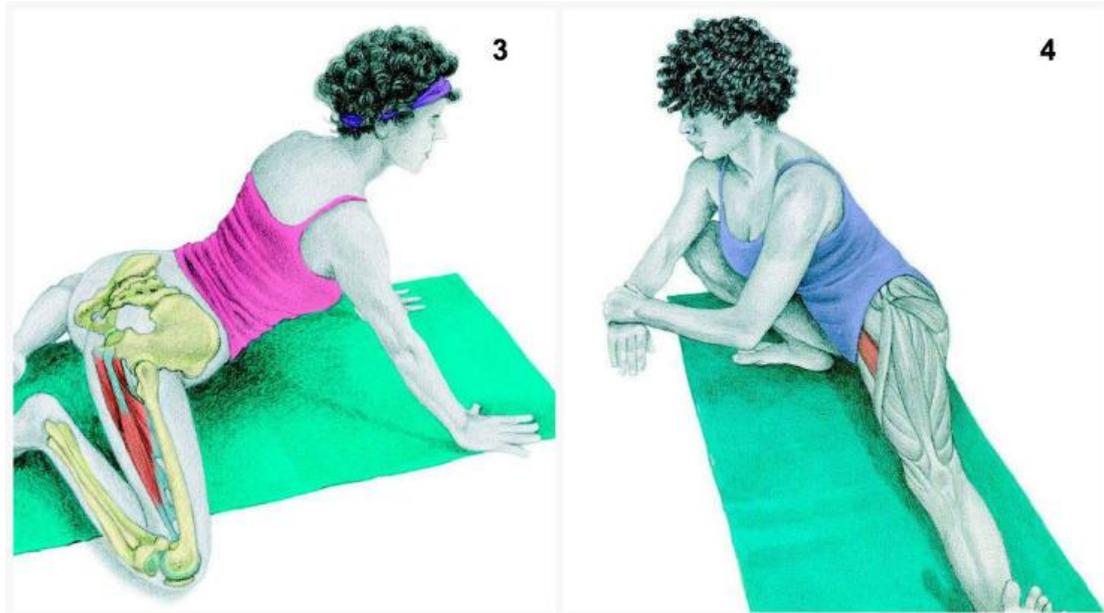
This stretch requires a good base of flexibility. Simply sit on your heels with your hands behind you, and push your hips up and forward. Try to keep the pressure off your lumbar spine. If you have any neck pain or impaired mobility in the neck, don't drop your head back as you perform this stretch.

2. Wide Forward Fold

Muscles emphasized: adductors and hamstrings.

This little stretch will open your hips. Start by sitting on your bum, with your knees bent and your feet aligned with your groin. Hold your back straight and breathe deeply. As your muscles begin to relax, straighten your legs out. Gently lower your chest and reach out for your feet.

Pull the balls of your feet to stretch out your calf muscles. You can also use a belt if you can't reach your feet.



3. Frog Pose

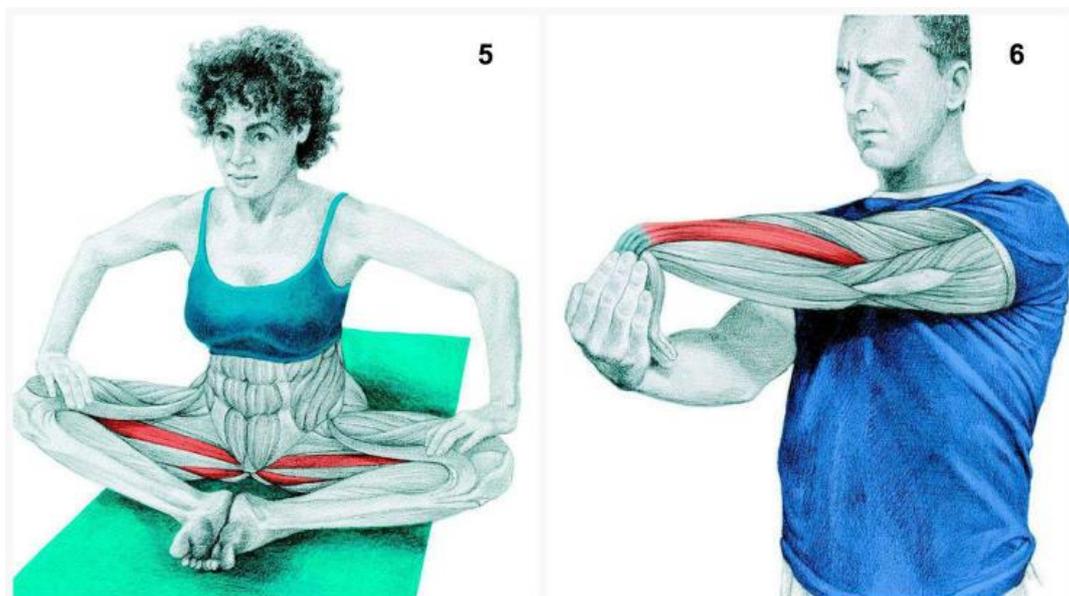
Muscles emphasized: adductors.

Stretch out your groin with this deep stretch. Start by resting your hands and knees on a yoga mat. Widen your knees until you feel resistance in your groin and upper thigh. Gently push your hips forward or backward to deepen the stretch

4. Wide Side Lunge Pose

Muscles emphasized: adductors.

Stand up with legs apart in a wide stance. Bend forward and walk your right leg outward. Bend your right knee and point your left toes towards the ceiling. Keep your right foot firmly on the ground and rest your weight on your right hip.



5. Butterfly Stretch

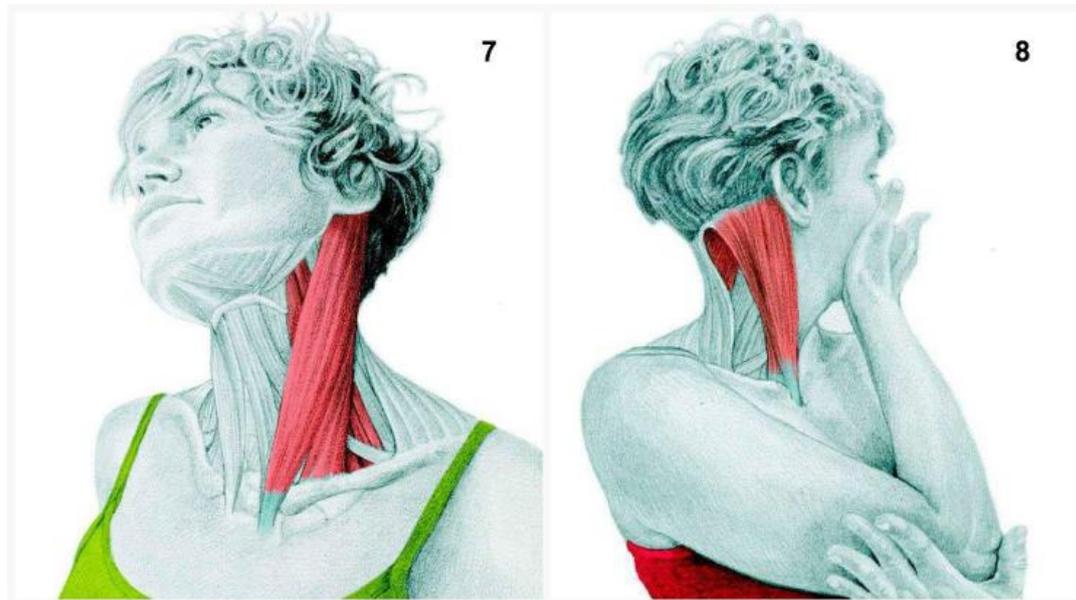
Muscles emphasized: adductors.

Sit down comfortably and bring the soles of your feet together. Keep your back straight. Deepen your stretch by applying pressure on your knees with your hands or elbows. The closer you keep your feet to your groin, the more you'll stretch your upper thigh muscles. Once you feel a good stretch, move your feet away from your hips and bend forward to try to touch the ground. This will loosen up your lower back muscles.

6. Forearm Extensor Stretch

Muscles emphasized: Forearm extensor.

Stand up with your shoulder and back straight. Roll your shoulders backwards to open up your chest. Stretch your arms out in front of you. Place your right hand over your left hand and apply pressure. Your left hand should bend at the wrist and you should feel pressure in your forearm. You can also bend your wrist in the opposite direction for a fuller stretch.



7. Lateral Side Flexion of the Neck

Muscles emphasized: sternocleidomastoid "SCM".

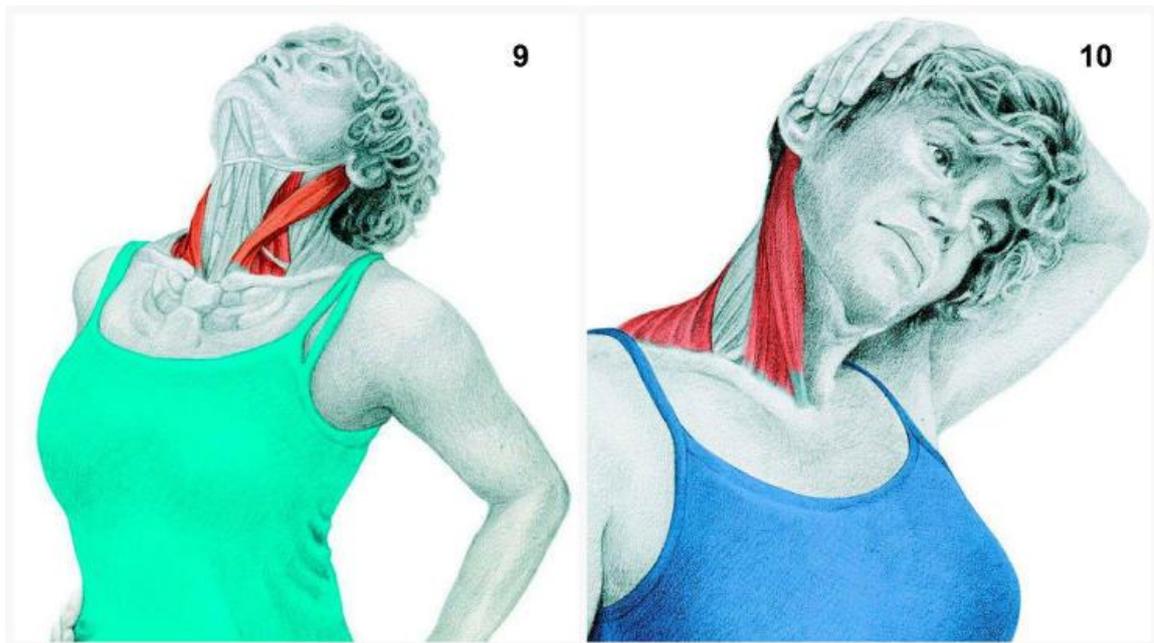
Keep your neck long and straight, slowly band your neck towards your left shoulder, but do not touch it. Try to make sure that your neck is straight and in line with your spine. You can take it a step further by sitting on a chair and holding on to the bottom of your seat

8. Neck Rotation Stretch

Muscles emphasized: sternocleidomastoid "SCM".

Begin by slowly rotating your neck towards your left. Make sure to keep your chin up to engage the right muscles.

You can also use your left arm to apply pressure on the right side of your chin.



9. Neck Extension Stretch

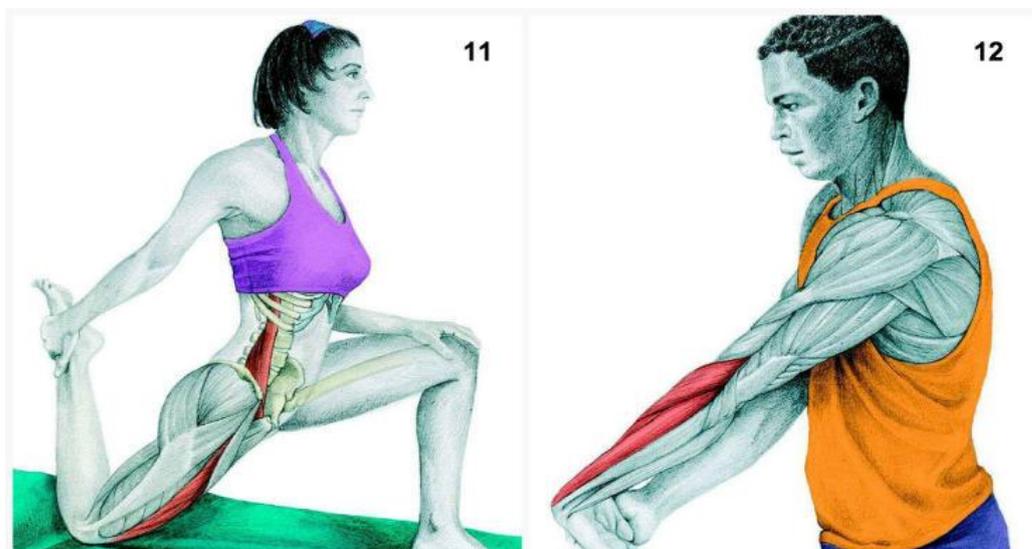
Muscles emphasized: sternocleidomastoid “SCM”.

Stand up straight and place your hands on your hips. Keep your back straight and gently tilt your head backwards. Keep your shoulders back to make sure your spine is in the right position.

10. Lateral Side Flexion of the Neck with Hand Assistance

Muscles emphasized: sternocleidomastoid “SCM” and upper trapezius.

This stretch is similar to the Lateral Side Flexion of the Neck (n°7). Keep your neck long and straight, slowly band your neck towards your left shoulder. Take your left hand and gently pull your head towards your left shoulder. You can deepen the stretch by sitting on a chair and holding onto the seat with your right arm.



11. Half Kneeling Quad / Hip Flexor Stretch

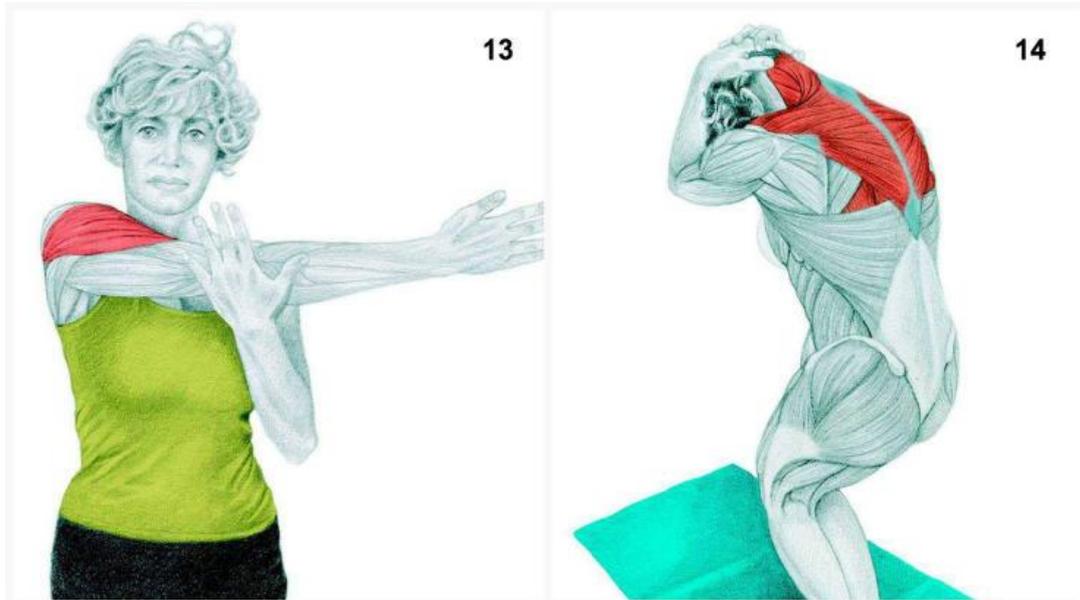
Muscles emphasized: psoas and quadriceps.

Start on the floor on your knees, standing tall. Bring your left hip forward, supporting yourself by placing your left foot in front of you. You should feel a stretch in your hip and you put you weight on your left foot. Place your right hand your right foot and bring it towards you. Hold the stretch for a minute if possible.

12. Forearm Extensor Stretch

Muscles emphasized: forearm extensor.

Stand up with your shoulder and back straight. Roll your shoulders backwards to open up your chest. Stretch your arms out in front of you. Place your right hand over your left hand and apply pressure. Your left hand should be rbent at the wrist and you should feel pressure in your forearm. Your can also bring your arms above your head while holding the same position to stretch your shoulders.



13. Lateral Shoulder Stretch

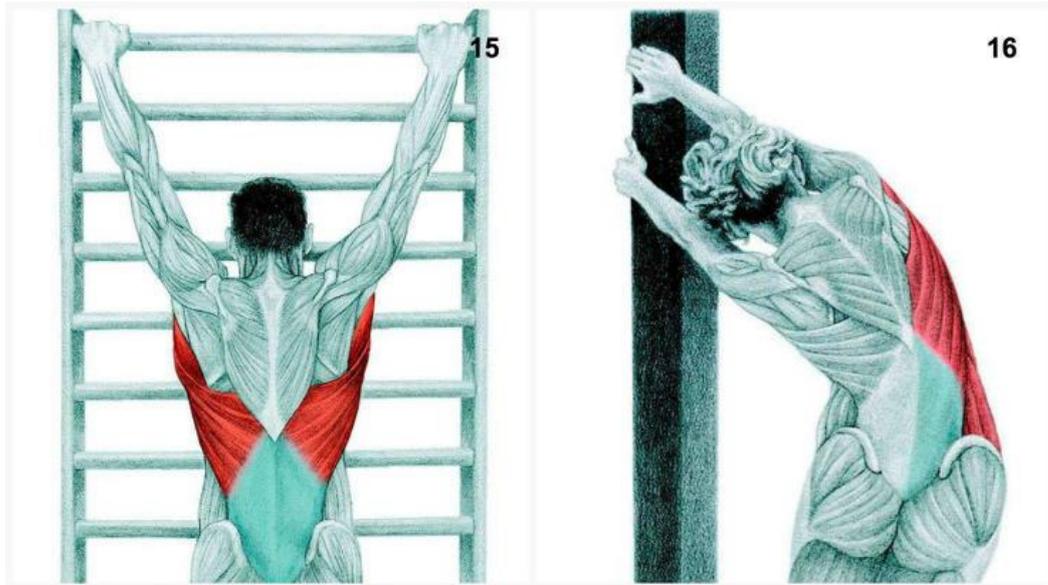
Muscles emphasized: side deltoid.

Place your right arm across your chest. Cross your left arm across your chest and apply pressure just above your right elbow.

14. Standing Assisted Neck Flexion Stretch

Muscles emphasized: trapezius muscle.

Stand tall with your feet together and firmly grounded. Slowly sit your hips backwards and round your upper back towards you. Slowly push your chin into your chest.



15. Lat Stretch with Spinal Traction

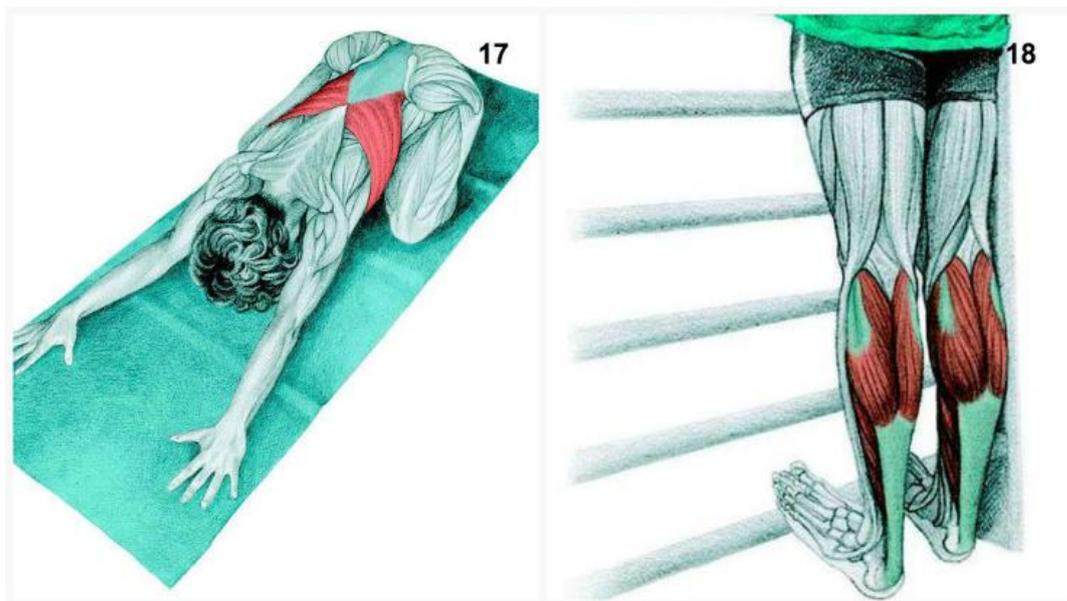
Muscles emphasized: latissimus dorsi.

Using a wall bar, grip the tallest bar you can reach and begin you lift your feet off the ground. You should feel it in your chest and lats. If you can get your feet completely off the ground, you'll also feel it in your lumbar spine. If you suffer from shoulder pain, do not perform this stretch.

16. Lat Stretch at the Wall

Muscles emphasized: latissimus dorsi.

Place both your hands on the corner of a wall or post. Hold the corner on the left side of the post and slowly pull your body to the right. This will stretch the right side of your chest and hips.



17. Child's Pose

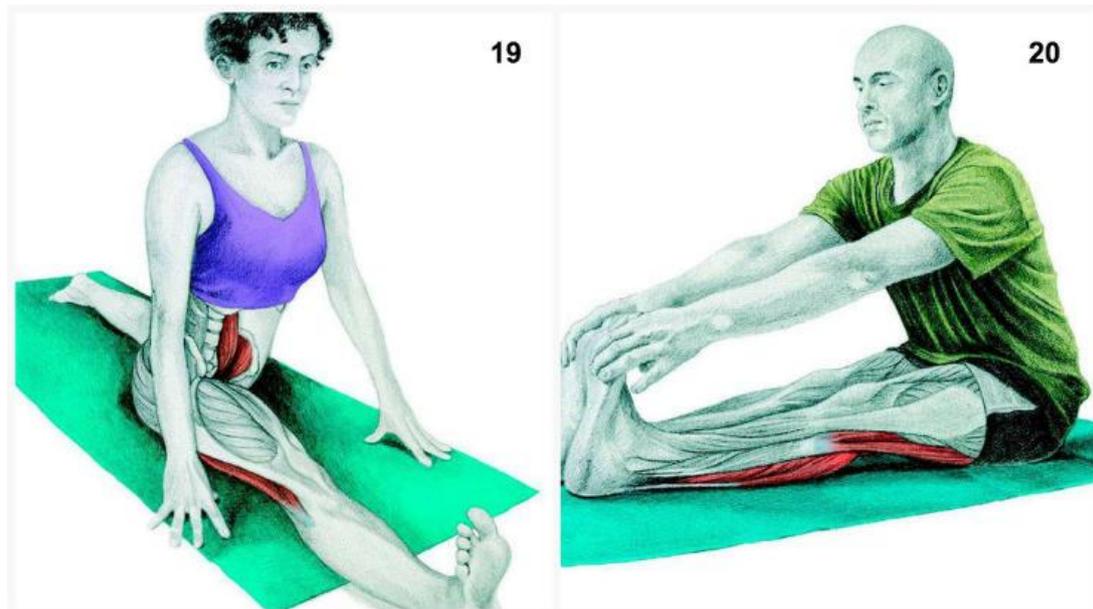
Muscles emphasized: latissimus dorsi.

Start on the ground with your hands and your knees on the floor. Sit backwards onto your legs and place your forehead onto the ground in front of you. To get a better stretch, keep your knees wide apart. Your back should be slightly arched.

18. Standing Calf Stretch

Muscles emphasized: soleus and gastrocnemius.

Stand near a stair step with our legs shoulder's width apart. Place your toes onto the step and try to keep your back straight. To get a better stretch, turn your toes slightly outward or inward to engages different muscles in your calves.



19. Front Split

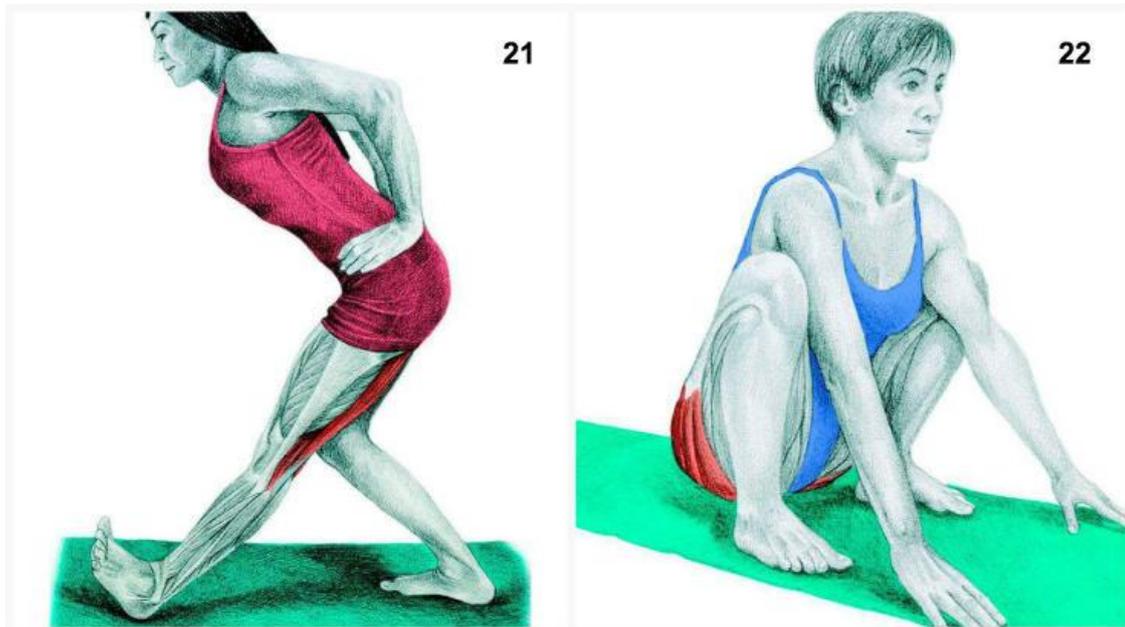
Muscles emphasized: psoas and hamstring.

This stretch requires a high level of flexibility and really needs to be done in a slow and controlled way. Start in the kneeling lunge position (see number 11). And slowly extend your leg in front of you. You can also start by standing with one leg in front of you and the other behind. Slowly move your legs further apart until your groin touches the floor.

20. Seated Forward Fold / Seated Toe Touch

Muscles emphasized: hamstrings and calf

Sit into your bum with your legs in front of you. Bend forward and try to touch your toes. If you can't quite reach, bend your legs and grip your feet. Slowly extend your legs until you feel a stretch in the muscles under your legs.



21. Single Leg Forward Bend

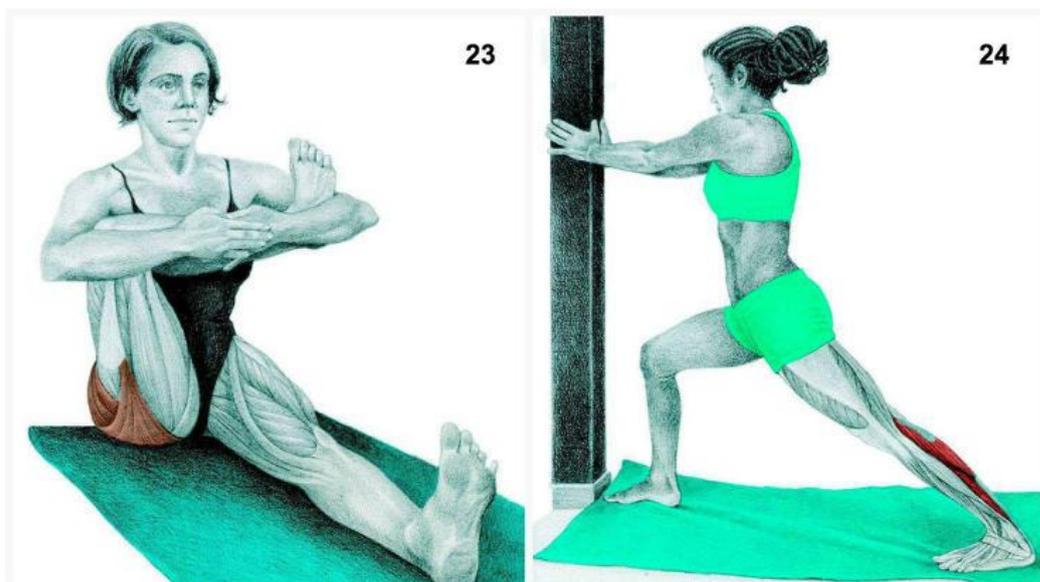
Muscles emphasized: hamstrings.

Stand with one foot in front of the other. Keep your back straight and place your hands on your hips. Bend at your hip and lift the toes of your front foot towards the ceiling.

22. Deep Squat

Muscles emphasized: glutes.

Begin by standing with your feet a shoulders width apart. Hold your weight on your hips and heels. Place your arms in front of you inside your legs and place a bit of pressure inside our knees.



23. Seated Half King Pigeon Pose

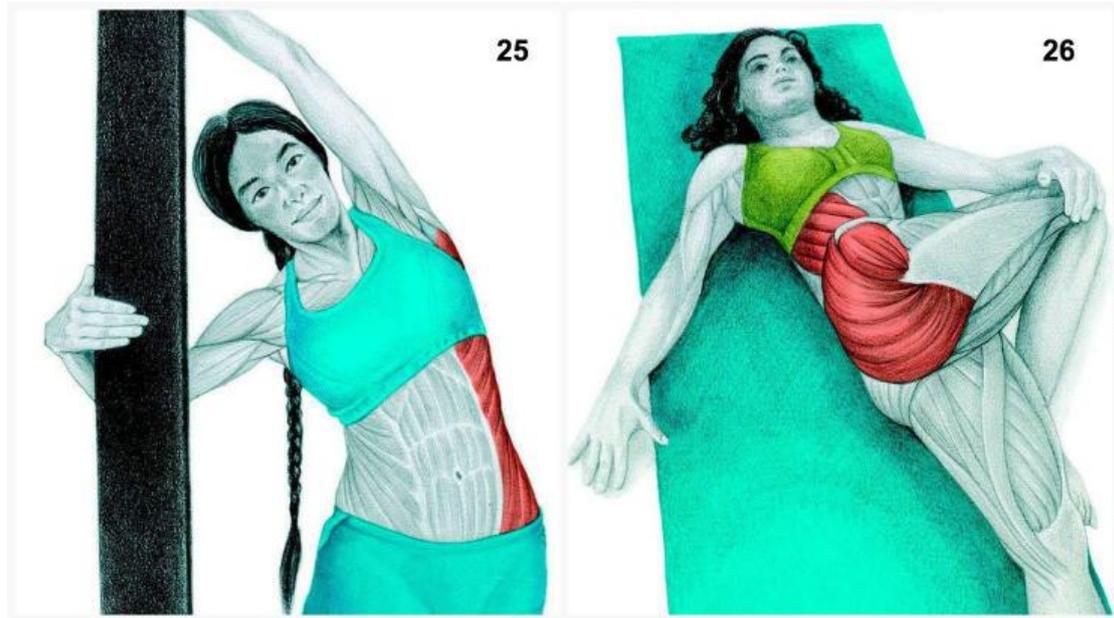
Muscles emphasized: glutes.

Sit down with your legs in front of you and pull your right leg towards your chest. Rotate your hip outward but keep your spine straight.

24. Standing Calf Stretch at the Wall

Muscles emphasized: soleus and gastrocnemius.

Stand in front of a wall and begin in a lunge position. Make sure that your back foot is slightly turned outwards. Gradually lower that foot towards the floor to stretch your calf muscles.



25. Lateral Flexion at the Wall

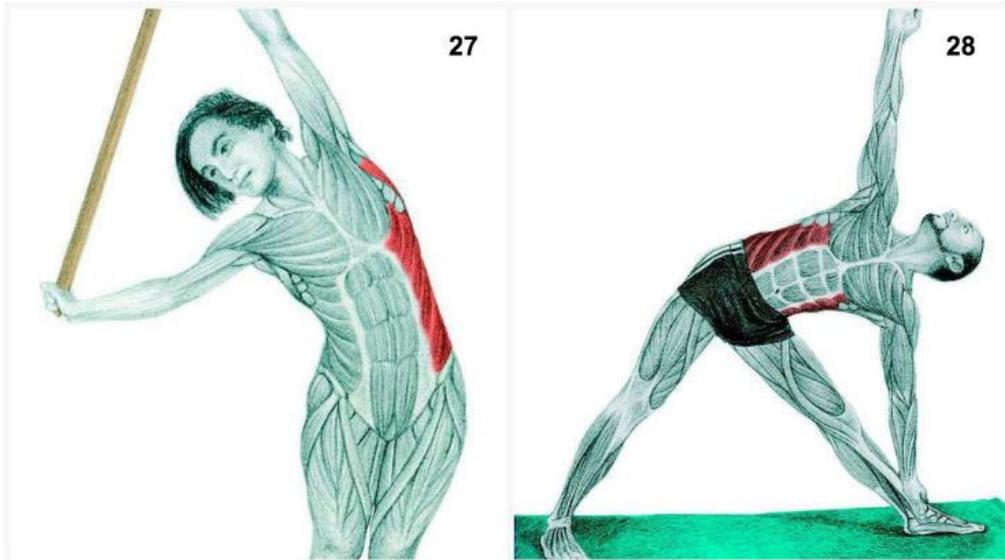
Muscles emphasized: external obliques.

This is a milder version of stretch n°16. Standing tall, hold the outer side of a post and push your hips away from that post.

26. Supine Twist

Muscles emphasized: glutes and external obliques.

This stretch is great to relieve sciatica pain. Start by lying flat on your back with your arms on your side. Bring your left leg across your body and hold your left knee with your right hand. Take deep breaths to really open up your chest and rib cage. If this stretch is too hard for you, hold both knees towards your chest and gently rotate them to your left, keeping your back and head on the floor.



27. Lateral Flexion with a Dowel

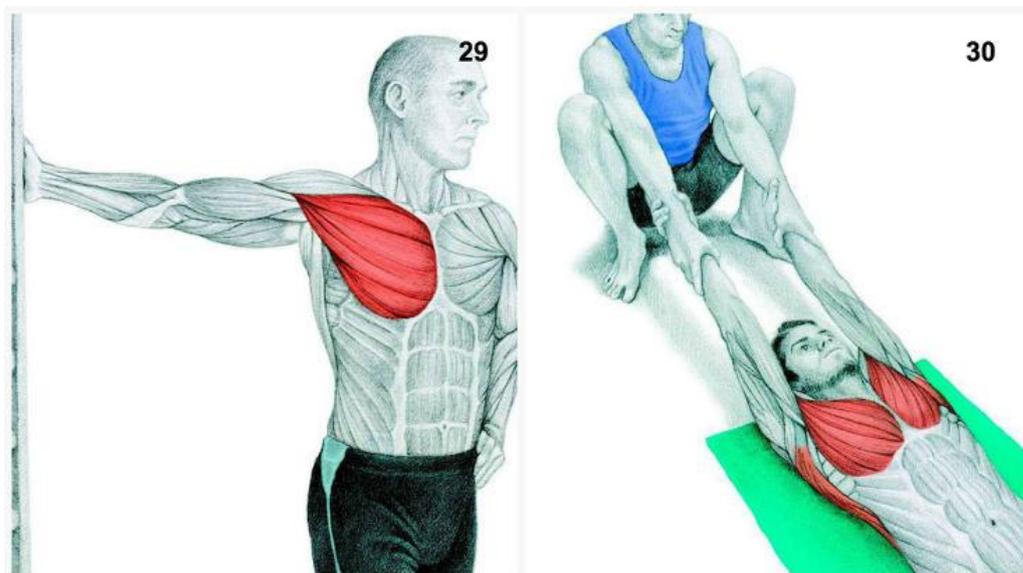
Muscles emphasized: external obliques and latissimus dorsi.

Stand tall with your hands above your head. You should be holding a stick or a towel, keeping your hands about a shoulder's width apart. Gradually push your hips out to the side and keep your shoulder rolled back. If you have problems with your lower back, do not perform this stretch.

28. Triangle Pose

Muscles emphasized: external obliques.

Stand with your legs far apart, the left should be straight in front of you and the right behind you. Your back foot should be away from you at a 90° angle. Place your left hand on your leg in front of you and bend forward, keeping your back straight. Then, place your right arm towards the ceiling, slightly rotating your body in the process. Your head should be looking up.



29. Chest Stretch at the Wall

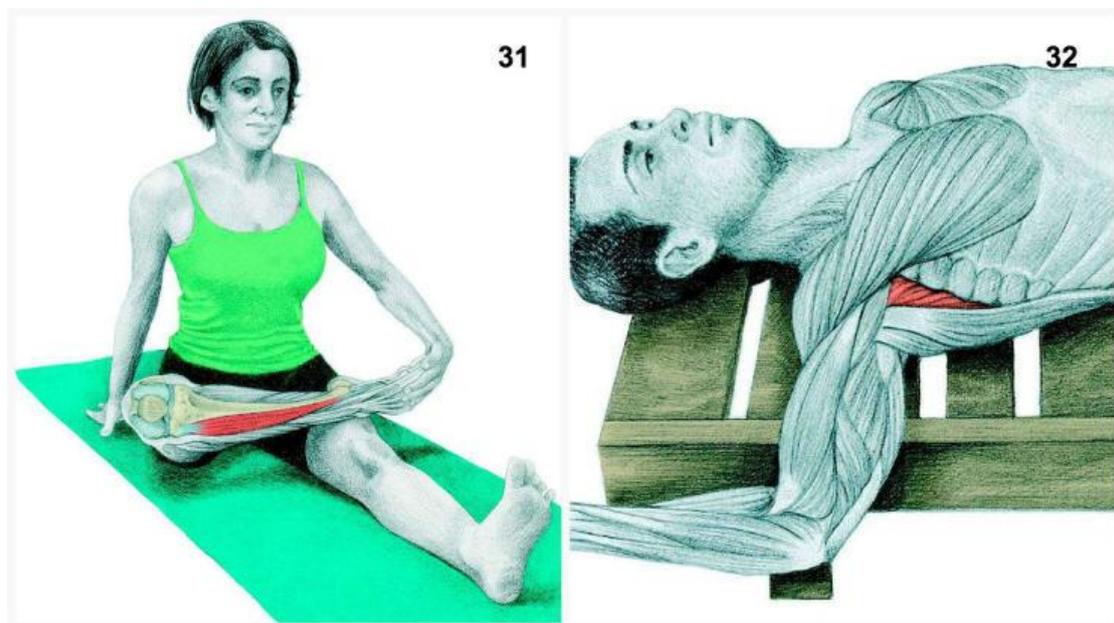
Muscles emphasized: pectorals.

Start by facing a wall and place your right hand on that wall. Your hand you be turned towards the right with your thumb towards the ceiling. Gradually rotate your body away from the wall. You should feel this stretch in your chest and belly. Don't push it too far or you can damage your shoulder joint.

30. Assisted Chest Stretch

Muscles emphasized: chest and latissimus dorsi.

You'll need a partner to perform this stretch. Begin by lying down on the floor and holding your palms face up. Your partner should be seated in a deep squat near your hands. Ask you partner to hold your hands and gently pull them away from you. The stretch should affect your chest, arms and spine.



31. Seated half Pigeon Variation

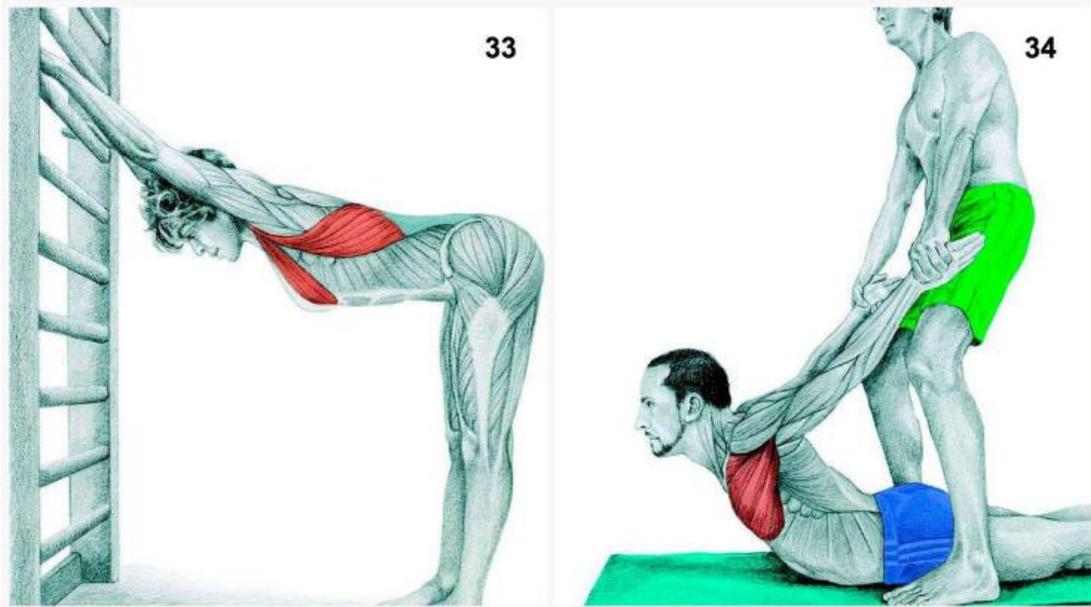
Muscles emphasized: anterior tibialis.

Sit with your feet out in front of you. Fold your right leg, bending at the knee so that your right ankle rests on your left knee. Place you right hand behind you and slowly bend forward. You can also rotate your body to the left to stretch your back.

32. Supine Shoulder External Rotation Stretch

Muscles emphasized: subscapularis.

Lie flat on your back and place your arm beside your body. Your elbow should be at a 90° angle and your forearm should not be touching the floor. Gradually lower your forearm to the floor above your head. If you can't reach, your rotator cuffs are too tight: loosen them up with a massage or physical therapy.



33. Down Dog Variation at the Wall

Muscles emphasized: pectorals and latissimus dorsi.

Stand far enough from a wall so that when you touch it your body is parallel to the ground. Lower yourself into this position by rotating your hips and keeping your back straight. Once in the proper position, move your chest forward and make a slight arch in your upper back to stretch your lats and chest muscles. You can also bend your knees to really get into it.

34. Assisted Chest Stretch Variation

Muscles emphasized: pectorals.

Once again, you'll need a partner for this exercise. Start by lying face-down on the floor. Your arms should be along your body with your palms face down. Your partner should stand above you at hip height and pull your hands upwards and back. You should feel a deep stretch in your chest muscles, but it's not recommended for people suffering from shoulder pain.

Πηγή: www.dailyhealthpost.com