



Flexibility and optimal health

Flexibility is one of the three pillars of fitness, according to the American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine. The other two are cardiovascular conditioning and strength training. Good flexibility helps you reach your peak fitness level and can be part of injury prevention, improve your circulation and may stave off conditions like arthritis. Flexibility is achieved through the regular practice of stretching, which many people skip until they've sustained an injury.

You'll gain multiple benefits by improving flexibility:

- Improved relaxation
- Increased strength
- Fewer injuries
- Less pain
- Improved posture



Flexibility varies from person to person. Your flexibility, which is the ability of joints to move unrestricted and pain free, can be affected by injury, aging, inactivity or lack of stretching. It can make everyday activities easier, such as reaching, sitting, standing and bending. It may also keep you from a strain injury by doing something as simple as picking something off the floor.

Stretching is a great way to develop flexibility. Why not try it first thing in the morning, since you've likely slept in the same position for hours? It'll get your circulation moving, relieve stress and help you feel good about doing something positive for your body.

As you age, lubricating fluid in your joints decreases and cartilage becomes thinner. Regular stretching can help you maintain flexibility, which can lead to benefits such as:

- Improved ability to perform daily activities
- Improved balance, decreasing the risk of fall and injury
- Improved posture, which reduces hunching over
- Decrease risk of injuries
- Increased blood flow to your muscles

Always consult your doctor before beginning a program to improve your flexibility.

Sources: [health.harvard.edu](https://www.health.harvard.edu)*, [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com)*, [health.ucdavis.edu](https://www.health.ucdavis.edu)*, [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)*, [heart.org](https://www.heart.org)*, [minervamedica.it](https://www.minervamedica.it)*, [healthfully.com](https://www.healthfully.com)*

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