

# TOOLBOX TALKS

The Upside of Safety



## Stretching

We stretch before we workout, run, and play sports but why don't we stretch before a full day of working? Did you know that on average, employees miss eight days of work each year due to repetitive strain injuries! Simply stretching before you work can help lower the risk of your muscles getting injured. Below are several stretches courtesy of The Hartford:



### NECK

- Start with your head facing forward.
- Turn your head slowly to one side as far as comfortable.
- Then turn to the other side.
- Repeat five times.



### SHOULDER CIRCLES

- Slowly move your shoulders in a circular motion: upward, forward, downward and backward for forward circles.
- Reverse the direction for backward circles.
- Repeat five times each direction.



### ARMS, SHOULDERS AND RIB CAGE

- Interlace your fingers.
- With your palms facing upward above your head, press your hands upward, stretching your arms. Hold for five seconds.
- Gently stretch to one side, hold for five seconds and return to center.
- Gently stretch to opposite side, hold for five seconds and return to center.
- Repeat five times.

VARIATION:  
Press hands forward at shoulder level.



### CHEST AND SHOULDERS

- Bend your elbows with your hands near your shoulders.
- Breathe in through your nose.
- As you exhale, lower your elbows down and back.
- Aim your elbows at your back pockets.
- Hold this position for a few seconds and then relax.
- Repeat five times.

VARIATION:  
Keep elbows at shoulder height.



### SHOULDERS, BACK AND HIPS

- Place your palms on your lower back while in a standing position.
- Leaning your shoulders back, stretch your upper body backwards. Hold this position for five seconds.
- Return to a neutral position.
- Repeat five times.



### WRISTS

- With your forearm in a comfortable horizontal position and your palm toward the floor, bend your wrist down.
- Then raise your hand, extending your wrist.
- Repeat five times.



### "FENCING"

- In a standing position, place your hands against a stable object or wall to support yourself. Move one foot back about two feet. Be sure that both feet point forward.
- Shift your weight forward over the foot in front, bending the forward knee up to 90-90 degrees.
- Hold the position for 1-2 seconds and slowly return to the standing position, keeping the forward foot out in front.
- Repeat five times.
- Switch position with the opposite leg forward and repeat five times.



### KNEE STRETCH

- In a standing position, support yourself by holding onto a stable object, like a wall or a table that is bolted to the floor.
- Bend your right knee, bringing your foot up toward the back of your thigh.
- Grasp your foot with your right hand, gently stretching your knee, moving your foot toward the back of your thigh.
- Slowly release your foot and return to the original standing position.
- Repeat, alternating legs, five times each leg.



### SHOULDERS AND ARMS

- Extend one arm at shoulder level across your chest.
- Place your opposite hand on your elbow and gently apply pressure toward the opposite shoulder, stretching your arm across your chest.
- Repeat, alternating sides.

## Tips when Stretching

- Breathe while doing the stretches. Do not hold your breath.
- Stretch gently. Avoid jerking movements.
- Go easy at first. Start with a few exercises and gradually increase.
- Discontinue if pain occurs. Pain and discomfort after you exercise may indicate that you did too much. Check with your doctor when in doubt

