

BETTER BODIES

Be healthy for the long stretch

Materials: Worksheets

Directions: Read the worksheet, complete the activity and discuss with the Group.

Sitting for long periods allows our muscles time to shorten and tighten up. When we finally get up, we can feel achy and tense. So, what's the answer?

Stretching!

Stretching helps us maintain a range of motion in our joints. It provides us with better posture and balance, so we're less likely to injure ourselves when we're exercising. But the benefits of stretching go even further.

Stretching increases our circulation and blood flow, which send oxygen to our brains. And proper blood flow means clearer thinking and a happier mood.

Let's take a few minutes to stretch and ensure we're keeping our muscles flexible, strong and healthy.

For the first stretch, we'll demonstrate how to stretch and touch your toes. For the second stretch, we'll ask each of you to choose a favorite stretch for the Group to do. Try and pick a variety of stretches to target the most important muscles in our body, like our arms, legs, back, neck, wrist and ankles.

Let's get started!



ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Sit on the ground with your legs extended in front of you. Bend at your waist and reach for your toes. Hold your toes and your position until you feel resistance. Then, we'll count to 10 together:

1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8... 9... 10...

Remember to be careful, because it's easy to overstretch. As soon as you feel some tension, stop and hold.

Now, we'll do five more stretches. Count together:

1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8... 9... 10...

- 2 Everyone gets a chance to choose a stretch for the Group to perform. When it's your turn, first explain how to do the stretch. Then, demonstrate the stretch as you count to 10:

1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8... 9... 10...

When your demonstration is over, you and the Group will do the stretch five more times and count to 10 together:

1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8... 9... 10...

Don't forget the importance of stretching your muscles each and every day. It's just what your body ordered!

