

Youth Health Lesson Series
Stretch It Out
Lesson Activity

Group Stretch

For this activity you will simply be leading the children in a stretching activity. Begin with everyone standing in a group and facing you. March in place for about three to five minutes to warm up the muscles. Perform the stretches below together. Hold each stretch for 20 to 30 seconds. Instruct the children not to bounce during the stretches and to breathe normally.

The Giraffe - Full Body Stretch: Raise arms over the head. Clasp hands together and reach towards the ceiling/sky. Focus on stretching the whole body from the feet to the finger tips. The hands are the giraffe's head trying to reach the leaf at the very top of a tree.

The Chicken Wings - Chest Stretch: Reach hands up to gently touch the sides of your head at about ear level. Keeping your hands there, concentrate on pressing your elbows back, stretching your chest. Your arms look like raised chicken wings.

The Bear Hug - Back Stretch: With your arms extended out in front of you, clasp your hands together. Make a circle with your arms as if you are bear-hugging a tree. Concentrate on stretching your upper back and shoulders.

The Cat - Lower Back Stretch: Bend at the knees into a squat position. Place your hands on you knees. Contract your stomach muscles and round the back, stretching your lower back as if you were a scared cat with an arched back.

The Unicorn - Triceps Stretch: Extend your arm over your head. Now bend at the elbow and reach one hand behind your head and down your back as far as comfortable. Use your other hand to gently press down at the elbow to stretch the triceps muscle on the back of the arm. The point your elbow makes at the top of your head is the unicorn horn. Repeat the same stretch on the other arm.

The Sleepy Flamingo - Quadriceps Stretch: Stand with your feet together. Bend your right knee, raising your heel up to your bottom. Grab your right foot with your hand at the laces of your shoes. Concentrate on stretching the front of your leg by pressing the laces against your hand. Keep your knees together, and don't bend over while stretching. Standing on one leg resembles flamingos as they sleep. Repeat the stretch on the other leg.

The Bowing Horse - Hamstring Stretch: Stand with your feet together. Extend your right leg out in front of you and rest your heel on the ground with your toe up. At the same time, bend the left leg that is supporting you. Lean forward as you reach towards the toe of your right foot, stretching the back of your leg. Your legs look like the front legs of a horse that bows like what you sometimes see in the circus. Repeat the stretch on the opposite leg.

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