

Trunk Stretch. *Start Position:* The person lies on their back with their knees bent and feet flat on the bed. Partner holds their knees to keep knees close together.

Directions for Stretching: As they exhale, rotate their knees to one side until they feel a mild stretch in their trunk and opposite hip. Move one of your hands to their shoulder or torso to help them to maintain this position (shown in second picture). To end, slowly bring their legs back up to the starting position. Repeat on the other side.



Calf Stretch. *Start Position:* The person lies on their back with their legs straight out in front of them. Cup their heel with your hand (as pictured) to rest your forearm along the bottom of their foot. With your other hand, hold their shin to steady it on the bed.

Directions for Stretching: Slowly lean forward, applying pressure against the sole of their foot with your forearm (push their toes and lower foot up toward the top of the bed). Stop when they feel a mild stretch in their calf (the back of their lower leg and ankle). Release their foot slowly. Repeat on the other side.



Stretching with a Partner

Neuromuscular diseases may cause muscle weakness. As muscle weakness progresses, it can become difficult to move joints through their full, normal range of motion, and when a person does not move as much, their muscles can become less flexible. This may make it more difficult for them to do daily activities, like getting dressed or getting out of bed. Stretching can help keep muscles flexible so they can do these activities. Stretching may also help with the stiffness and pain that can come with poor flexibility. These exercises are meant to help keep joints moving on a daily basis. The instructions in this brochure are for the caregiver that will be helping their partner to perform each stretch.

Stretching Tips

Stretching should always be pain-free. If you are not sure how to perform a stretch, or don't know if it is a safe stretch for you, stop immediately, and talk to your Physical Therapist before continuing.

Move your partner into and out of each stretch slowly.

Stand close to your partner in a wide stance. This will make stretching safer and easier for both of you.

These stretches can be performed in a reclined or semi-reclined position if your partner is uncomfortable lying flat.

Always do these stretches on a safe and stable surface.

Hold each stretch for 30 seconds to 1 minute.

Perform each stretch 2-3 times every day.

Questions?

Contact your physical therapist or bring this brochure with you to your next clinic appointment.

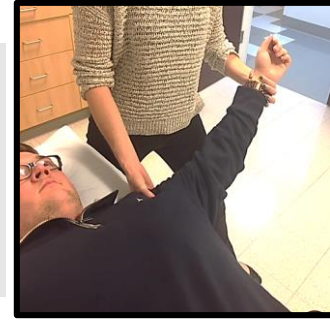
Forward Shoulder Stretch. *Start Position:* The person lies on their back with their arms at their sides. Gently grasp their arm just above their wrist and around their upper arm above the elbow.

Directions for Stretching: Gently raise their arm overhead keeping their thumb pointed up. Stop when they feel a mild stretch in their shoulder. Slowly return their arm to a comfortable position on the bed. Repeat on the other side.



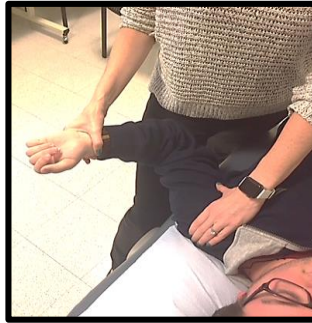
Sideways Shoulder Stretch. *Start Position:* The person lies on their back with their arms at their sides. Gently grasp their arm just above the wrist and underneath the upper arm.

Directions for Stretching: Gently raise their arm to the side, like a jumping jack. Stop when they feel a mild stretch in their shoulder or trunk. Slowly return their arm to a comfortable position on the bed. Repeat on the other side.



Rotation Shoulder Stretch. *Start Position:* The person lies on their back. Place a folded up towel under their upper arm so it is resting at a level even with their chest. Press gently on their shoulder to keep it still. Gently grasp their forearm above the wrist.

Directions for Stretching: Slowly move their lower arm away from you in a rotating motion (as pictured). Stop when they feel a mild stretch at the front of their shoulder. Slowly return their arm to a comfortable position on the bed. Repeat on the other side.



Hip/Buttock Stretch. *Start Position:* The person lies on their back. Gently grasp behind their thigh and support their lower leg. Take a wide stance with your knees bent. When you pick their leg up, lift with your legs, not your back.

Directions for Stretching: Gently bend their leg and bring their knee slowly toward their chest. Stop when they feel a mild stretch in their hip/buttock region. Slowly and carefully return their leg to a comfortable resting position on the bed.



Chest Stretch. *Start Position:* The person lies on their side. Place a rolled up pillow or towel behind their back on the bed.

Directions for Stretching: Help them roll from their side onto their back. They will lie on top of the pillow or towel with their arms out (as pictured). The pillow/towel should be running down the middle of their back, along their spine. They should feel a mild stretch across their chest. Slowly help them to bring their arms back to their sides and to roll off of the pillow or towel.



Back of Leg Stretch. *Start Position:* The person lies on their back with their knees straight. Take a wide stance with your knees bent. Gently grasp their thigh and lower leg. Lift with your legs, not your back.

Directions for stretching: Raise their leg up toward the ceiling. Keep their knee straight, if possible. Stop when they feel a mild stretch along the back of their leg. Slowly and carefully return their leg to a comfortable resting position on the bed. Repeat on the other side.

