



LOOSEN UP

6 GREAT REASONS TO STRETCH

In the simplest terms, there are two primary reasons to stretch. *1) It's good for the body,* and *2) It's good for the mind.* But let's take a closer look at why we gotta stretch...

1 Stretching will make you stand taller. Stretching helps to prevent age-related height loss. In addition, stretching can help maintain proper joint alignment, leading to a more erect posture at any age.

2 Stretching will make you feel better. Stretching is an excellent way to relax and reduce stress. Many people stretch with intensity, holding extreme, overextended positions. But proper stretching at a lower intensity can be a therapeutic way to relax and naturally vent anxiety.

3 Stretching decreases the chance and/or severity of injury. Stretching makes our tissues more elastic and less likely to tear or strain. It's not the cure-all to injury, but it is one of the most important injury prevention measures you can take.

4 Stretching helps relieve age-related muscle stiffness. As we age, muscle stiffness makes it more difficult to perform routine daily tasks. Regular stretching can combat age-related stiffness by helping to keep our muscles and other tissues elastic.

5 Stretching focuses the mind. By spending time stretching before a workout or competition, we can prepare mentally for upcoming physical activity. This allows us to focus on the task ahead and commit ourselves to a specific goal, be it competitive or personal.

6 Stretching could save your life. It's true, stretching prepares the body for the increased demands of physical activity by elevating the heart rate and increasing blood flow. This can prevent a stroke or heart attack caused by an immediate strain on the heart and circulatory system.

Important Reminders

Don't stretch cold—Starting a workout with intense stretching can be dangerous. Before you stretch, do a couple minutes of light movement—a two-minute walk will work.

Don't sweat it—Young people are generally more flexible than older people, and women are generally more flexible than men. Know your limits, and set realistic expectations.



Brittle Bodies

The Symptoms Of Poor Flexibility

General stiffness

Aches and pains

Sharp or shooting pains in full range of motion activities

Discomfort in sitting for long periods of time

Difficulty getting out of bed in the morning

Muscle discomfort in the morning that improves over the course of the day

Tension headaches—usually caused by neck and back stiffness

Chronic isolated muscle injury

Feeling of general muscle fatigue

Joint pain

 You know you need to improve your flexibility when you truly believe a good stretch is fully extending the footrest on your favorite recliner.





Is the news about growing portion sizes simply a scare tactic? Another “flash-in-the-pan” news story quickly to be forgotten? Unfortunately, the answer is no. Over the past 20 years, portion sizes have become super-sized...and we’re not just talking about fast food. In fact, Americans are now consuming almost 150 more calories a day...add this up over the course of a year, and that’s an additional 15 pounds of weight gained!

So what can you do to control the amount of food you’re consuming during the day? Check out these simple tips you can try when eating out or staying home.

Eating Out: Tips For Eating Smaller Portions

- j **Order a regular hamburger.** Try ordering a regular (single patty) hamburger the next time you visit a fast food restaurant. By substituting a smaller burger for a larger one, you’ll save about 150 calories.
- j **Order the small fries.** By eating only a small order of fries instead of the “super-sized” fries, you save about 300 calories.
- j **Don’t drown yourself in soda.** A small soda has 150 fewer calories than a large one.
- j **Share and share alike.** This is simple math. If you share an entrée with a friend the next time you visit a restaurant, you’ll only eat half as much.
- j **Order an appetizer.** But only an appetizer! Getting an appetizer instead of a main course can help control the amount you eat because appetizers are often much smaller than the entrées.
- j **Get it to-go.** Ask for half your meal to be packaged in a “to-go” box, and eat it for lunch the next day.



By filling up on fruits and vegetables, you’ll not only cut your cancer risk but you’ll also be substituting low-calorie, high-fiber food for higher calorie foods and snacks.

Staying Home:

Tips For Eating Smaller Portions

- j **Don’t “bag it.”** If you’re snacking at home, put a few pretzels or chips in a small bowl instead of eating by the handful right out of the bag.
 - j **Go single.** Instead of buying snack foods in bulk (or even by the box) buy single servings—this way you won’t eat the whole box/bag in a moment of weakness.
 - j **Take half off.** When using butter, sour cream, mayonnaise and cheese, use only half the amount you usually do. It may take some getting used to, but it’s easier than going without. Also, check out some of the low-fat varieties of these spreads, they can be very good.
- Remember: Just because it’s low-fat or low-calorie, doesn’t mean you can eat as much as you want.** Calories add up, even when you’re eating low-calorie or low-fat foods.

Still Hungry?

Cutting portion sizes takes some getting used to. If after attempting to cut your portion size, you’re still feeling hungry, try filling up on fruits and vegetables. The American Cancer Society recommends five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day to help prevent cancer, and chances are you’re not getting enough. By filling up on fruits and vegetables, you’ll not only cut your cancer risk but you’ll also be substituting low-calorie, high-fiber food for higher-calorie foods and snacks. Plain and simple, in the battle to cut portion size, fruits and vegetables will help you feel full and save on calories at the same time. Give ‘em a try!

Sources: National Institutes of Health and the American Cancer Society

