

Stretches

FACILITATOR HANDOUT

Mindful stretching can help us be more aware of our bodies. It can help us to re-establish the mind-body connection. Depending on the poses you choose, they can be relaxing, alerting, energising or calming. Stretching is a great way to improve our co-ordination, balance, flexibility, blood flow and general mental and physical health.

Here are some basic stretches that you can do. None require any specialist equipment, other than a bit of space!

Remember to keep your breathing steady throughout these poses – don't hold your breath! Allow inhalation and exhalation to happen naturally and rhythmically throughout the stretches.



Demonstration

Facilitator to talk through moves below while explaining them

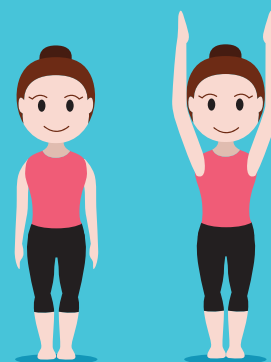


Activity

Get them to stand in a space (move furniture out of the way if required) and guide them through the following stretches

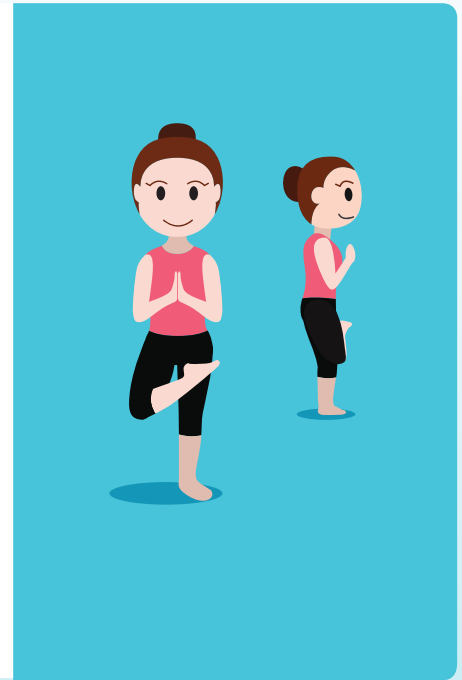
Mountain pose

- Stand up straight with your arms by your sides
- Place your feet slightly apart in line with your shoulders
- Bend knees very slightly to avoid them locking
- Focus your attention on your feet. Feel the pressure of the ground in both feet
- Divide your weight evenly between your two feet
- Relax your back, shoulders and arms
- Keep your head straight by imagining a cord fastened to the top of your head, which is gently pulled upwards



Tree pose (do not ask any student to do this who may have difficulties with balance – be aware of the surroundings!)

- Stand in mountain pose (as above)
- Move your weight onto your right foot
- Bend your right knee slightly and grasp your left ankle in your right hand
- Place the left foot against the inside of your right knee and stretch your right leg
- Fold your hands in front of your chest and raise them in the air
- Hold this position as long as you remain balanced
- Return to mountain pose
- Repeat on the other leg



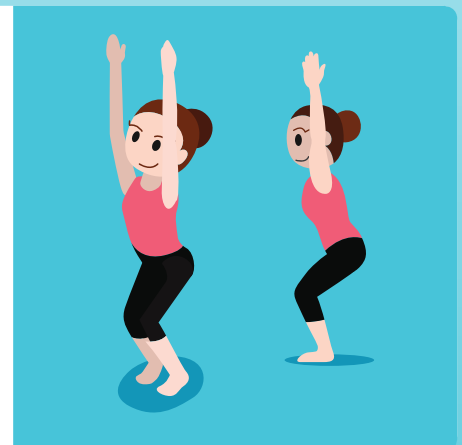
Dancer 1

- Start in mountain pose
- Place your weight on your left leg
- Bend your right knee backwards and take your foot in your right hand
- Pull that foot as close as you can towards your bum
- Inhale then stretch your left arm above your head
- Pull your right foot as close to your bum as you can, remember to keep breathing
- Remain in this pose as long as you can remain balanced
- Return to the mountain pose
- Repeat on the other leg



Chair pose

- Stand up straight in mountain pose
- Inhale and stretch your arms out in front of you at shoulder level
- Breathe out and bend your knees as if sitting down
- Keep the upper part of your body straight
- Hold the position as long as you can, breathing evenly
- Return to the mountain pose
- Repeat this several times



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