

# Healthy Leg & Foot Exercises

## 1. Body Stretch

Raise your arms up over your head and stretch! Breathe in deeply as you are raising your arms, hold it for a few seconds, and then drop your arms down and exhale. The next time you raise your arms, try placing one foot in front of the other and raising up on your toes. Now, reverse the foot placement and stretch again. Notice how much better your balance is with one foot in front of the other instead of having them side by side. Try this weight shift position of your feet for everything you do-it takes a lot of stress off your back.



## 2. Walking

The oldest and very best exercise is walking. It seems so simple that it is almost silly to talk about it. However, since most people do not walk correctly to a degree that could possibly constitute good exercise, here are some pointers:

Wear light and non-restrictive clothing and a good pair of walking or running shoes. Do not carry anything in the arms or hands. To walk properly you need to involve the spine, and for this you need to swing your arms. Carrying a briefcase in just one arm will certainly prevent you from exercising the back during walking. You must swing the arms and have the whole trunk rotating. Make sure you feel your back moving gently during walking.



## 3. Stress reduction

The following technique of breathing with your diaphragm will help reduce muscle tension and stress. Place one hand on your stomach. Breathe in through your nose, expanding your stomach as the air enters. Now blow the air out through your mouth. Try that a gain. Breathe in through your nose and cause the air to go where it can make your hand raise as your stomach expands. Open your lips a little and exhale. Try to do five to ten repetitions of this, slowly.

## 4. Heel Raises

This exercise tones up calf muscles. Starting position: stand erect, hands on hips, feet together. Action: Count 1-Raise body on toes. Count 2-Return to starting position. Do twenty repetitions.



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### 5. Back Leg Swing

This exercise tones up the back and buttocks muscles. Starting position: Stand erect behind chair, feet together, hand on chair for support. Action: Count 1-Lift one leg back and up as far as possible. Count 2-Return to starting position. Repeat equal number of times with other leg. Do twenty repetitions.



### 6. Hamstring Stretch

Do this exercise if you sit or use your legs a lot during the day. It stretches your leg and makes the back stronger. Place one foot on a chair or step. If just placing foot up is stretching the back of the leg, bend your knee a little to ease the tension or place your foot on a lower surface. Now breathe in and exhale, slowly lean forward, bending the hip-not at the lower back (this is extremely important), until you feel a moderate stretch in the back of the leg. Hold this position for a slow count to thirty. Now place your foot down and then repeat the stretch on the other side.



### 7. Hip Stretch

Sitting a lot can cause your hip muscles to tighten up and put strain there, and on your lower back. Comfortably place a knee on something about twenty-four inches above the ground. A chair seat may be appropriate. Place one knee on the surface

### 8. Partial Squat

This exercise strengthens the legs and puts the curves in the lower back. Place your hands on your hips; spread your feet about ten inches apart. Now breathe in through your nose and as you exhale through your mouth, bend your knees until your

that you have chosen for support. Put the opposite foot out in front with the knee slightly bent. Hold with one hand, on to something for support, if you need it, and then slowly bend the forward knee to about a ninety degree bend. You should feel the stretch in the hip of the leg in the chair. Hold for a slow count of the thirty and then return to a standing position. Do two for each leg.



heels start to come up from the floor. Hold this position for ten to fifteen seconds and then return to the starting position. It is great exercise for anyone who has to sit a lot during their work day. Not only is it good for a warm-up activity- it can help reduce fatigue in your back throughout the day.

