

Self-Stretching

Performing a daily stretching routine can be your most effective way to prevent or delay loss of flexibility with Duchenne muscular dystrophy. When performed correctly, daily stretching can delay the onset of muscle contractures. Ultimately, it is possible to prolong physical ability and independence with a daily stretching routine.

The following sets of stretches can be performed by an individual on his/her own, dependent upon physical abilities, as a daily self-stretching routine.

General Rules of Stretching

- Stretching should not be painful
- Stretches should be held for 60 seconds and repeated
- As the muscle relaxes, increase the pressure
- A daily routine is most effective

Lower Extremity Stretches



1. Hamstring Stretch - Wall

Lay at the corner of two walls, place a heel on the wall and the other leg along the wall on the floor. Slowly move closer to wall until a stretch is felt in the back of the thigh. Hold for 60 seconds and repeat 1-2 times.



2. Gastrocnemius (Achilles)

While standing at a wall, position one foot in front of the other. Lean forward while keeping the back knee straight and toes pointed forward. Hold for 60 seconds, relax, then repeat.



3. Soleus Stretch

While standing at a wall, position one foot in front of the other. Slowly lean forward while bending the back knee and keeping toes forward and heel on the ground. Hold for 60 seconds, relax, then repeat.



4. Trunk Rotation

While laying on back with knees bent, swing legs to one side, allowing the hips and lower back to rotate in the same direction. Hold for 10-20 seconds, then rotate to opposite direction and hold for 10-20 seconds. Repeat on each side 10-20 times.

Upper Extremity Self-Stretches



1. Wrist Extension Stretch

While seated, place palms down at your side. Slowly move hands backward until a stretch is felt. Hold for 60 seconds, relax, reposition, and repeat.



2. Wrist and Finger Extension

While seated, place palms together in front of chest, slowly lower hands, keeping elbows out until a stretch is felt. Hold for 60 seconds, relax, reposition, and repeat.



3a. Neck Extensor

While laying on back, position neck in a comfortable position looking forward.



3b. Neck Extensor

Tuck the chin down while extending the back of the neck. Hold for 5-10 seconds, relax, and repeat 5-10 times.