



Living with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) or Psoriatic Arthritis (PA) can be a daily battle. A simple stretching program doesn't take much time and it can help decrease stiffness and increase mobility making every day activities easier. Here are 4 easy to do seated stretches to get you started.

Before you begin consider these important Do's & Don'ts

Choose a firm but comfortable chair.
Breathe normally; never hold your breath.

Start by holding each stretch for 10 seconds and build up to 30 over time as comfort allows.

Don't bounce; it can tighten the muscles you are trying to stretch.

Don't lock your elbows or knees.

Stretch at the times when you are the most rested and the least stiff.

Consult your doctor before doing this or any exercise program.



NECK STRETCH

Start with body erect, shoulders relaxed, and slowly turn head to the left as far as you can comfortably stretching your neck. Hold for 10-30 seconds. Return to starting position. Then turn to the right. Alternate left and right until you've done 4 reps on each side.



CHEST, SHOULDERS AND UPPER BACK STRETCH

Arms are up at your sides, elbows at 90-degree angles, hands about shoulder height, palms out. Keep elbows bent, and slowly press arms back while gently squeezing shoulder blades together. Hold the position for 10-30 seconds. Return to starting position. Repeat for a total of 4 reps.



Wrist and Hand Stretch

Sit relaxed and upright, hands resting on knees, palms up. Slowly spread hands and fingers out as far as you can while flexing your wrists downward pointing fingertips toward the floor. Hold for 10-30 seconds.

Then slowly roll fingers into a fist and flex wrists upward. Hold for 10-30 seconds.

Alternate downward and upward stretches for 4 reps each





BACK OF LEG, KNEE and FOOT STRETCH

Sit at the edge of the chair with knees bent, heels on the floor. Slowly extend left leg in front of you and flex the foot up, keeping heel on the floor and spread toes. Place hands gently on right thigh and lean slightly forward until you feel a stretch on the back of your leg. Keep back straight and abs contracted.

Hold for 10-30 seconds. Alternate legs 4 reps on each leg.

Mirabai Holland M.F.A. legendary fitness pioneer, specializes in preventive and rehabilitative exercise. Her Moving Free® approach to exercise is designed to provide a movement experience so pleasant it doesn't feel like work. For more info please visit www.movingfree.com