



# Stretch for life



Stretch your life to  
its fullest potential



## Introduction

This stretching programme is the result of my many years as a practicing Osteopath. My patients would often forget the exercises I prescribed and as I could not find a credible source of information to direct them to, I put this programme together for their benefit. Because of its success I was urged to share this information so anyone could use it to assist in healing themselves of common muscle aches and pains. Stretch for Life will also assist in the prevention of any further injury.

I have combined the medical approach of Osteopathy with disciplines from yoga, martial arts and techniques I have designed myself. I have interlaced these to create a simple and effective group of stretching and strengthening exercises that give the very best results in an efficient and timely format.

This programme is designed for all ages and for the unfit to the professional athlete. There are exercises you can do on your own and many which a stretch partner will get you a far better therapeutic result. Although this is not a complete fitness programme, I have added strengthening exercises that will massively help in the improvement of muscle problems and the prevention of further injuries.

3D digital images of the muscles we are working with make this programme even more informative. You can look inside the body and see what is happening which will help you understand where and why we are doing these exercises. Three high definition cameras give you the best angles to watch each exercise.

**NB:** This exercise programme is not a substitute for proper medical diagnosis. If you have any concerns about your medical condition it is important you contact your registered medical practitioner for medical advice before you undertake this programme.

# Volume One- Upper body

## Neck and jaw

The neck and shoulders are classic areas where stress and anxiety settle into the muscles. When this is focused into the neck headaches are common. Neck pain can range from annoying to unbearable. Strain patterns, like in most parts of the body, can build over the years until one day an insignificant action or event can trigger a cascade of pain.

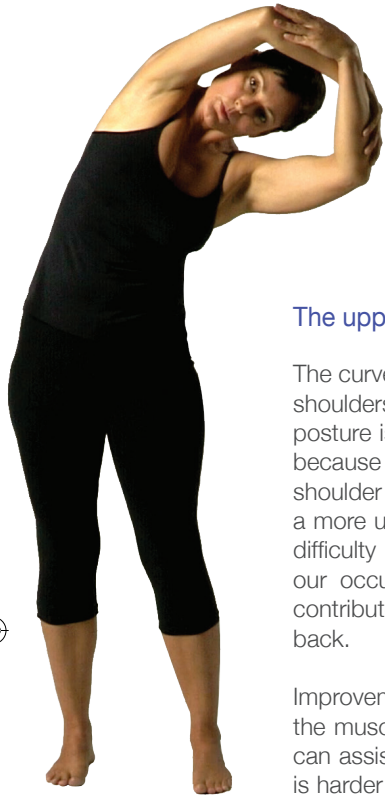
Many of the muscles in the neck stem from the shoulders and upper back, so the neck, like all the other regions in the body, can't be seen in isolation. To help the neck we also have to look at the shoulders and upper back. The 3D animation takes you right into the spine so you can see what is causing the problems.



Many people have problems with their jaw aching, clicking and locking. Again a big emotional stress zone, so home exercises can make a huge impact on jaw function.

The neck is a vital part of human anatomy requiring special attention. If you have a neck problem it is vital that you seek medical advice first. Although the neck exercises in this programme are gentle you must be careful and attentive when doing them.

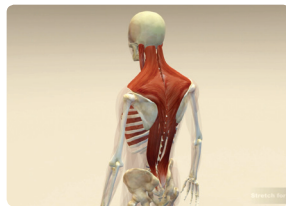




## The upper back

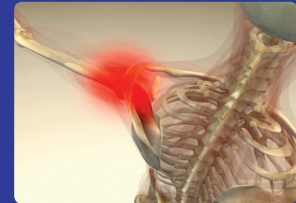
The curve in the upper back and the slump of the shoulders are the greatest indicators of what our posture is like. Few of us have ideal posture and because of this we get endless upper back and shoulder problems. For some it is easy to have a more upright posture while others have greater difficulty due to inherited family tendencies, our occupation or excessive stress which can contribute to the increased curve in our upper back.

Improvement in spinal function and less strain on the muscles due to stretching and strengthening can assist anyone to perfect posture. Although it is harder to get a good stretch in the upper back because of the rib cage, there are some really good exercises in this chapter that can be done to make significant improvements to your posture.



## The shoulders

The shoulders, along with the upper and lower back, have a lot to do with posture. The shoulder is held together by a complex array of muscles attaching the arm to the shoulder blade and then to the torso. It only requires strain in a single muscle to set off a cascade of muscle strain resulting anywhere from a mildly sore shoulder to a completely frozen shoulder.



Most people experience shoulder pain across the back of the shoulders or across the top of the shoulders and up into the neck. The discomfort in these muscles is often caused by the muscles on the front of the shoulder being too tight and dragging the shoulder forward, causing the muscles on the back to tighten excessively, in an attempt to prevent the shoulder from dropping forward.

It is easy to focus on the painful area and completely miss the actual cause of the problem. Because our arms point forward, most of our activities, from driving a car to breast feeding drag the shoulders forward causing this pain and dysfunction of the shoulders.

Using the exercises in this programme can positively help the shoulders, especially when applied diligently and effectively. When used in conjunction with exercises for muscles in related areas, there is a huge benefit for the development of an ideal and sustainable posture.

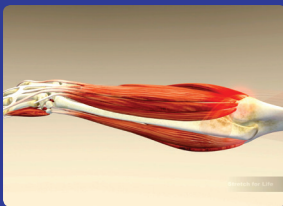




## Arms and hands

The arms and hands are the regions of greatest importance when it comes to repetitive strain or occupational over use. Muscles love to stretch and contract. The fibers moving in and out keep the blood circulating and prevent them from tightening, becoming ropey and inelastic. Repetitive activities like keyboard work require minimal finger and hand range of motion thus creating a great deal of muscle tension in the forearms. To get the fine dexterity in the fingers we need to hold the upper arms, shoulders and neck still, which also causes tension to build in these regions.

Many will likely recognize this syndrome. From hands and forearms that are incredibly sore to hands that just will not function at all. I have had great success with the stretch and massage techniques in this chapter which are the same ones I use in my clinic.



Some osteopathic treatment may be required initially after which you can manage this potentially devastating condition on your own. It is so important to do something about it as soon as you can, as left unchecked, this condition can become crippling.

## Posture

In essence this is the chapter that ties everything together so that you can improve your posture. Perfect posture is the ideal we should all strive for. Walking, sitting or working in the ideal posture will ensure less muscle stress and strain thereby less physical problems and less pain. By achieving your ideal posture you will also increase your energy levels to enjoy work, sporting and personal activities to the fullest.



## Routines

These chapters offer an effective montage of exercises honed into a routine that will assist you in stretching or strengthening the body zone of choice. You can choose a chapter that relates to a particular area that is causing you problems or you can use both the stretching and strengthening routines to keep your body in good form and function so you can get the best from life.





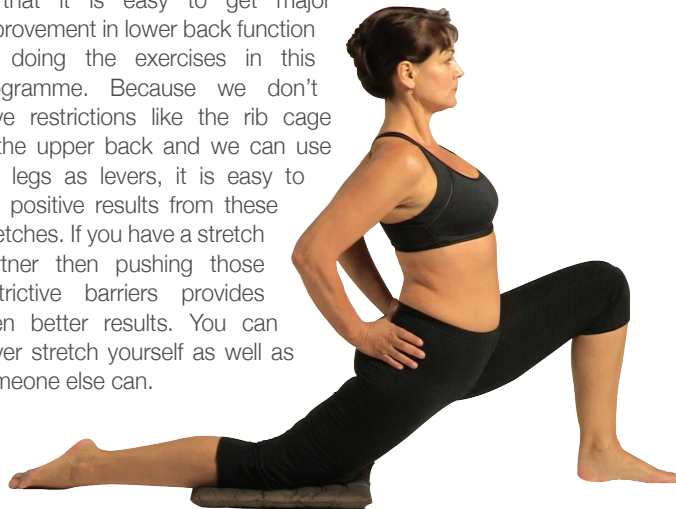
# Volume Two - Lower Back

## Lower back

Along with the neck the lower back is the most common complaint. Every body at sometime has had a sore lower back. This situation mostly arises from doing something that is outside of normal activities. Moving furniture, lifting pot plants or perhaps an occupational or sporting incident or perhaps just a stiffness that slowly creeps up and some small insignificant event triggers a major lower back melt down.



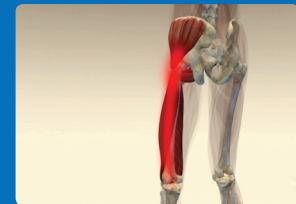
The good news about this region is that it is easy to get major improvement in lower back function by doing the exercises in this programme. Because we don't have restrictions like the rib cage in the upper back and we can use the legs as levers, it is easy to get positive results from these stretches. If you have a stretch partner then pushing those restrictive barriers provides even better results. You can never stretch yourself as well as someone else can.



## Hips and pelvis

Painful hips are a common condition that mainly affects women. This is due to a number of possible causes including the difference in shape of the female pelvis and tradition female roles in family and community and certain sports like tennis, squash and golf.

The pain often runs from the sacrum area out to the hip and either down the back or the outside of the leg. If it's down the back, it can be described as sciatic pain. In both these situations it is commonly just one or two muscles that can be causing all the trouble. There are specific stretching exercises in this chapter that focus on these muscles and by doing them the problem can be solved simply and effectively.





## Knees and thighs

The thigh muscles are less likely to give problems than muscles in other areas. The knees on the other hand can give all sorts of problems. They rely heavily on the strength of the muscles and ligaments that traverse the joint. Simply, knee pain is commonly either tightness in the muscles that traverse the knee, or weakness in these muscles which render the knees unstable making them more susceptible to injury.



The Stretch for Life programme includes effective stretches and strengthening exercises that have helped many people resolve their knee problems.

## Feet and ankles

Strengthening the muscles of the thigh helps strengthen the knee joint. Strengthening the muscles of the lower leg helps strengthen the ankle joint. Many people experience feet and ankle pain and in my experience it is easily remedied.



It is a matter of reducing the tension in the muscles and then strengthening them. This improves flexibility and function reducing pain and increasing resilience.

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**TIM JUDD**  
Registered Osteopath

Tim has been a practicing osteopath for 20 years in Auckland, New Zealand. Combining his medical knowledge and experience in martial arts and yoga he has developed a series of stretching and strengthening exercises that are simple and effective. Tim believes people can be more independent in their ability to look after themselves, their families and their friends.

