



Employee Wellness

Health Road Trip



Stretch Louis
Missouri



a GREAT PLACE TO STRETCH OUT

All one has to do is take a look around Stretch Louis to see that flexibility training is quickly catching on!

A recent survey, however, revealed that while most citizens had made a firm commitment to regularly participate in aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities, one important component of their overall fitness program was missing.

Only 10% of adults in this health-minded community reported doing flexibility training. Why is flexibility training important?

Let's take a look at a few of the many benefits of stretching.

- Improves posture
- Encourages greater freedom of movement
- Releases muscle tension
- Promotes a sense of mental and physical relaxation
- Reduces the risk of injury

Now that residents recognize how much they are missing by not making flexibility training part of their fitness routine, they are on a quest to stretch their knowledge about flexibility training.

And they're motivated to share their new wisdom with HealthTrip travelers. Get ready to relax and release your travel tensions, as Stretch Louis rolls out the red Yoga mat for our visit to this exciting city.

Stretch Louis Fact

Known to most as the gateway to healthy living, this signature city boasts a super stretchy arch monument standing 630 feet tall at the entrance to the city. It is the largest national monument in our country and was designed and constructed to be able to twist and sway despite being made of steel. This amazing flexibility allows it to stand strong and withstand high wind forces and even earthquakes.

Look to the big cats at nearby Stretch Louis Zoo to learn the ins and outs of proper stretching.

Whether it is a beautiful Bengal tiger, graceful Snow leopard, majestic African lion, or even your domestic furry feline friend at home, all cats seem to garner pure pleasure from stretching. In fact, most stretch frequently throughout the day without missing a beat. When it comes to safe and effective flexibility training, here is what every clever cat and human should know.

Warm up: Stretching cold muscles may increase your risk of injury. Take a few minutes to do a light warm-up prior to stretching. This might include 5-10 minutes of walking, biking, or Light calisthenics like jumping jacks.

Breathe: Take a deep breath in and slowly release the breath as you ease into each stretch. Continue normal breathing as you hold the stretch.

Hold and Repeat: Attempt to hold each stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Then repeat each stretch two to four more times to garner improvements in your overall flexibility.

Gentle, Gentle, Gentle: Stretch to the point of gentle tension. If a stretch causes you to feel pain, ease up. Straining or stretching a muscle too far can result in muscular injury.

Stop the Bounce: Bouncing during a stretch is not recommended and may cause injury. Gently hold each stretch to realize long term flexibility improvements.



Consider enrolling in a stretching class like Yoga or Pilates in order to stick with a consistent stretching routine.

FLEXIBILITY MADE FUN

If your stretching routine lacks consistency, why not try out one of the following group stretching class ideas below? It could be your most stretch-tacular idea yet!

YOGA

An ancient eastern practice, Yoga promotes slow gentle stretching with deep breathing. Yoga is a form of exercise that works to quiet the mind and release tension in the body. This, in turn, creates calm and relaxation. There are a variety of types of Yoga to choose from and most classes require only a Yoga mat.

TAI CHI

Often referred to as moving meditation, Tai Chi involves a series of movements or postures performed slowly and sequentially. The gentle movements stretch the muscles and calm the mind.

PILATES

Pilates strengthens the core, enhances balance, and promotes overall flexibility through a well-designed program of strengthening and stretching exercises. Classes may focus solely on mat exercises or include exercises using the Pilates reformer equipment.

WELLNESS CHALLENGE STRETCH LOUIS, MISSOURI

STRETCH IT OUT:

Like so many of us, residents of this gateway city lead busy lives. They work, tend to their homes and families, and do their best to stay fit and healthy.

But, residents are standing up straighter because their backs feel better. There are more smiles on faces than ever before as regular stretching has made muscle tension a thing of the past. And the waiting rooms in area orthopedic clinics are barren as the rate of everyday injuries in this city has plummeted.

Regular stretching is the key to maintaining good overall flexibility. Regrettably, is often the most frequently neglected component of a fitness program.

During our stay in Stretch Louis, our HealthTrip travel group has the opportunity to take the Stretch Out wellness challenge and begin establishing a regular habit of flexibility training. All it takes is about 10 minutes of your time each day to get started!

This month HealthTrip travelers are challenged to stretch for 5-10 minutes each day.

Don't forget to download your tracking sheet here:

<https://apps.weber.edu/wsuiimages/employeewellness/Challenges/Health%20Road%20Trip/Tracking%20Sheets/Stretch%20Louis%20Travel%20Log.pdf>

Looking for more:

Take the 2020 Minutes Challenge! Accumulate 2020 minutes of physical activity between April 1 – July 31 and earn a gym bag. Get the tracking sheet here:

https://www.weber.edu/employeewellness/Challenges_2020/2020_Minutes_Challenge.html

