

Fitness Forum: Stretch works on multitude of muscles

by CNS

This stretch lets your fingers do the walking.

THE MOVES: Simple cross legs, forward reach.

WORKS ON: Hip and lumbar spine mobility, groin flexibility.

SIMPLE STRETCH - To increase hip and back mobility, firefighter Bob Macy sits in a cross-legged position, then slowly reaches out as his chest sinks to the floor. CNS Photo by Nadia Borowski Scott. **SETUP:** Sit upright on the floor. Cross your legs in front of you so the calf muscle of one leg is touching midshin of the other. One leg should not be on top of the other. Try to get the outside edge of the feet and ankle bones to touch the ground equally.

STEPS: Start by slowly pushing down on the thighs with your hands until you feel a gentle stretch in the groin and hips. Hold 30 seconds and repeat two to three times. Next, place your fingers on the floor in front of you and try to "walk" them out as far as you can reach. Allow your chest to sink toward the floor by emphasizing the arch in your lower back (avoid arching your mid-back to reach further). The head should stay aligned with your spine. Using the muscles in your legs and buttock, try to pull the knees closer to the ground.

REPETITIONS: Hold each stretch 30 seconds. Repeat five times.

PRECAUTIONS: Avoid this stretch if it causes pain in the lower back or knees. Do not bounce to reach further. Breathe evenly.

OPTIONS: Experiment with different leg positions.

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