

Fitness Forum: This stretch improves your flexibility

by CNS

THE MOVES: A behind-the-back handclasp stretch.

NECK STRETCH - Firefighter/paramedic Tony Hardy performs the handclasp stretch with head and neck aligned and abdominal muscles tightened. CNS Photo by Nadia Borowski Scott. **WORKS ON:** Flexibility of the anterior shoulder, biceps and pectoralis muscles.

SETUP: Stand with an erect posture, but with the knees slightly bent. Reach both hands behind the back and interlace the fingers so the palms are firmly together. Keep the head and neck aligned so the ears stay centered over the shoulders.

STEPS: Keeping the chest and eyes up, roll the shoulders out, back and down while squeezing the shoulder blades together. Do not let the palms move away from each other. Tighten the abdominal muscles to keep the lower back from arching. Continue to breathe evenly.

REPETITIONS: Hold each stretch 30 seconds to one minute. Perform the stretch five times.

PRECAUTIONS: Those with shoulder instability should not do this exercise. Do not let your head project forward during the stretch.

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