

# Top 10 Easy Stretches for Overlanders

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*Remember: stretches should not be painful*

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Here are my top 10 stretches to do before and after a day out on the road. These are all stretches you can do without any special equipment and without lying on the floor. All stretches should be held for 30 seconds and repeated 3 times each so long as they are comfortable.

## Neck Stretch

Stand or sit. Keep your head facing forwards and take your head over to one side (ear towards shoulder). You can then use your hand to assist the movement and increase the stretch if comfortable.



## Pec Stretch

Stand next to a door-frame, edge of a wall etc. Place the forearm of the side you want to stretch against the wall. Take your arm up-to about 90 degrees (between your side and upper arm). Keeping your arm relaxed and still, gently rotate your body away from the arm until you feel a stretch in your chest and/or in the front of your shoulder.



## Wrist Stretch

Sit or stand. Keeping your forearm still, palm facing up towards the ceiling, bend your wrist back so that your hand moves downwards. You can then use your other hand to assist the movement and increase the stretch if comfortable. You can also stretch the other side by repeating the exercise but with your palm facing downwards.



## Shoulder Stretch

Sit or stand. Bring one arm straight across in front of you and use your other hand to support the arm and draw it in closer to your upper chest.



## Torso Twist

Ideally sit in a chair with a back. This will stop you twisting your legs so much, but you can do this in standing if more suitable. Rotate your upper body around as far as you can go, following the movement with your head. You can use your arms to increase the rotation if comfortable using the arms of the chair or nearby firm object.



## Toe Touches

Option 1. Be careful with this stretch especially if you are prone to back spasms. Maybe consider the seated stretch (Option 2) if needed. Standing, slowly and gently reach down towards your toes. Have something near to hold onto if needed.



Option 2. If the standing stretch is too much, do it in sitting position instead. Let yourself slowly relax forwards, moving your hands towards the floor.



## Back Extension

Stand up straight. With hands on your hips, lean back as far as comfortable with the movement coming from your lower back, not just your upper back.



## Hip Flexor Stretch

Stand up with something to hold for support. Bring your heel towards your bottom and use the hand of the same side of the leg you are stretching to grab your foot/ankle and hold it as close to your bottom as possible until you feel a stretch in the front of your hip/thigh. If you can't reach your ankle then you can use a towel or belt to place around your ankle to help bring it towards your bottom. While doing this exercise, do not let your knee drift forwards and keep it in line with your other knee. If you want to get a stretch more at the front of your hip, bring your leg back a little during the exercise (i.e. knee of leg you're stretching slightly back from standing knee, rather than in line).



## Hamstring Stretch

Sit on the edge of a chair. Keep one leg bent at 90 degrees and have the other one out straight with the heel resting on the floor. Lean forwards from the hips using your hands on your leg to support you, until you get a stretch in the back of your thigh. Alternatively you can stand to do this if more suitable.





## Calf Stretch

Stand facing a wall, worktop or solid object that you can place your hands on. Place one leg straight back behind you with your heel firmly on the floor and lean on your hands. Now let the front knee bend until you feel a stretch in your calf.



Please note, this is not an exhaustive list of stretches. These stretches target some of the larger muscle groups and ones prone to tightness when driving or riding all day. If you feel you get tight in a particular area then also add in stretches specifically for that area. We are always happy to offer suggestions if required.

Remember, if you have an injury in the area you are stretching or pain, please consult a physiotherapist or doctor prior to undertaking any new stretches or exercises. You undertake stretches and exercises at your own risk.

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