

Parcel delivery drivers and couriers are exposed to musculoskeletal injuries such as sprains, strains and herniated discs slightly more than the average worker in other industries. These types of injuries are common in the courier industry largely due to failure to prepare the body for work. Each workday, drivers are tasked with driving for extended periods of time coupled with entering and exiting the cab to deliver freight. Nevertheless, drivers can better prepare their bodies for the workday ahead by stretching. Have you ever watched an athlete prepare for a sporting event or a student prepare for gym class? The athlete and the student both have one thing in common, they both stretched before beginning physical activity to loosen and prepare their muscles and ligaments for work.

Why Should I Stretch?

Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) statistics indicate that work related musculoskeletal injuries are among the most frequently reported causes of employee injuries.

Pre-shift stretching and warm-up exercises reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injuries by reducing fatigue, improving muscular balance and posture, and improving muscle coordination.

Performing warm up exercises warms up the body, increases blood flow and increases the body's range of motion.

Things to Remember:

Stretching activities should take between 5-10 minutes to complete.

Stretching should be completed at the beginning of the workday and when returning from extended breaks.

Do not "bounce" when stretching.

Make sure you stretch both sides of your body.

While tension will be felt while stretching, do not continue if pain occurs.

What Muscles Should I Stretch?

All of them! As a courier, job duties often require drivers to engage all the muscles in the body to successfully perform the job. It is important to focus on the full body when stretching and include the:

- Arms
- Shoulders
- Neck
- Back
- Legs
- Abdominal

SAMPLE BEGINNER STRETCHES

Overhead Stretch (Upper Body)

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, knees and hips relaxed. Interlace your fingers and extend your arms above your head, palms up. Take 10 slow, deep breaths, elongating the stretch on each exhale. Relax, and repeat once more.



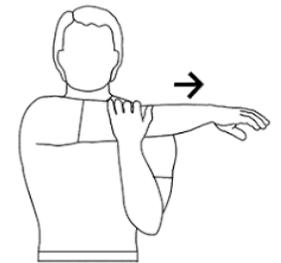
Quad Stretch (Lower Body)



Stand upright and bend one leg back, grabbing the top of that foot. Bring your foot as close to your butt as possible while keeping your bent knee in line with your other knee. Hold onto a wall for balance if needed and repeat on the other leg.

Shoulder Stretch (Shoulders)

Take one arm and extend it across your body. Gently press and pull your extended arm to deepen the stretch.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional resources, access our online Risk Management Center at midwesterninsurance.com/risk-management-center and use the keyword 'stretching' in the search field.