

Morning Stretch

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Take notice of a child waking up in the morning. He or she usually gives a big yawn, rubs the sand out of their eyes and then stretches arms and legs all the way out, top to bottom. They then hop out of bed and rev up the energy of the day. Children capture the essence and importance of the morning stretch. Do you?

Just as we break the night's fast with a good breakfast it is important to wake up our body, mind and spirit with a short but powerful stretch. If we think of it this way it will come naturally soon enough. Sleep is a powerful and necessary tool. It is something we can't live without. Waking up from a night of slumber and feeling refreshed from it helps start the day with wonder and possibilities to explore. And so, beginning tomorrow morning how about it? It only takes a few minutes.



Another added benefit to the morning stretch is stress reduction. The less stress in our daily lives, the more stable our blood sugars become. It is not always high carbohydrates that cause elevated blood glucose levels. Stress is a major culprit as well. The more we are aware of this and pay attention to simple tools such as stretching and breathing, the more likely our diabetes control and bg numbers will benefit.

Here are a few guidelines to help you get going with the Three A's that result from a morning stretch:

..... Alert, Aware and Active a fine way to greet a new day

1. *While still in bed open your eyes, and shift your vision from side to side and up and down a couple times then make a few circles clockwise and then counter clockwise.*
2. *Channel that child within and stretch out your entire body, arms all the way up and legs all the way down. Really stretch out. Do this two or three times. Feel your entire body coming to life.*

3. *With knees up twist from side to side holding each side for five seconds. Do this a few times.*
4. *Time to get up and get going, but before you do, stand with knees relaxed so not to block the flow of energy. Let yourself go and hang forward like a rag doll. Gently sway from side to side for about ten seconds while breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth. This is called a cleansing breath. Roll up slowly, vertebrae by vertebrae, to the count of 10.*
5. *Finally, standing with feet wide apart make big circles with your hips then with your waist several times in each direction.*
6. *Celebrate the new day!*