

# 3 BIG Benefits of Flexibility Exercises

[Tommy Cooper](#) asked his personal trainer if he could teach him how to do splits.

“How flexible are you?” his trainer asked.

“I can’t make Tuesdays,” Cooper said.



Are you ready to loosen up?

Imagine putting on a pair of loose pajama pants. You feel the softness of the fabric as you pull them up your legs and over your hips. You tie the drawstring, just enough to keep them up. They’re adjustable and comfortable.

Now put on a pair of pants that are tight. You suck in your stomach and shimmy to get them around your buttocks. As you struggle to pull up the zipper and fasten the button, you feel the strain in your waistline. You immediately begin to feel tense and cramped.

Strive to be more like your favorite pajamas. They’re simple but strong, soft but durable, symmetrical but flexible. They have plenty of wiggle room to allow for the movement of your body, thoughts and dreams.

You’re probably familiar with some of the foundations of fitness: strength, balance, endurance and flexibility. These are important not only for maintaining your **physical** health but also your **mental** and **spiritual** health. By practicing flexibility exercises in these areas of your life on a regular basis, you stand to gain three BIG benefits:

## 1. Become a more likable person.

**Stretch your relationships.** Who do you like to be around? Positive people who share your interests, profession, genes or personality, right? They comfort you without challenging you too much. When you're interacting with others, you're literally spending your time (your life) with them. Surprise people with deep questions like, "What's it like to be you?" Invite yourself into someone's personal space one day and back off the next. Exercise your thoughts and consideration by giving your full attention to the people around you. Your days and your relationships are among your most valuable assets.

**Connect with strangers.** Experiment with various activities which give you opportunities to interact with others. [MeetUp](#) is a great way to find others gathering for a common purpose. Be an active participant open to learn. Talk a little. Listen a lot. Imagine what life would be



like if you happened to be the person you're talking to. As you take time to partake in the stories that shaped their lives, it's easier to understand their perspectives and beliefs. It can be an enlightening exercise for you as well as others. Give people the gift of not only of your physical presence, but also the presence of your mind. By practicing the art of connecting with others, not only do you gain strength, but so do others around you.

**Become more tolerant of other people's beliefs.** It's not worth getting upset with colleagues, neighbors, family members or anyone else because of the decisions they make. Their choices are based on the beliefs that saddle their heart. Notice your emotions as they swell up inside you. Your emotional triggers have all been customized to you based on a concoction of your significant life experiences. Meet, greet or dismiss your emotions as they come to you. Leaders, counselors and

comedians make their living helping people with the physical, mental and emotional tightropes that connect them to others. Learn from these people and you'll become better at walking your own tightropes, finding ways to tap into deeper connections with others by loosening your own saddle. Ultimately, you walk away from nearly every encounter in life free, as you always have been, to act on your own convictions. With practice it becomes quite easy to be agreeable to things that have little relevance in the long run.

## 2. Improve your health.

**See yourself as you want to be.** Everyone has needs and wants, and some people have ambition as well. A few people are compelled to achieve big goals like becoming an olympic athlete, a bestselling author or the next Nelson Mandela, while others have smaller objectives like learning to cook, losing 10 pounds or reading a spiritual book. Regardless of how big or small your objective is, it begins with a thought. Thoughts are like seeds—some multiply. One tiny apple seed has the potential to become a mature apple tree producing somewhere between 50-100 apples a year. An apple seed, given the right environment, can eventually produce apples, but it will never produce oranges. [The Secret](#) to good physical, mental and spiritual health begins in the thoughts that occupy your mind.

**Stretch throughout the day.** Lay down on the grass in the evening and look up. Take a few deep breaths. What do you see? Lift your legs straight up. Maybe you'll see an airplane flying under your feet. Is there someplace you'd like to go? Slowly lower your legs toward your body reaching your toes



toward the ground behind your head. Hold the pose for a minute or so if you can. With regular practice, you'll be able to flex further. Maybe you can already touch your toes to the ground. Maybe not. Maybe you'll be able to next month or next year? Maybe never. Release your stretch. Give in slowly to the gravity which is pulling your legs back down to the ground. Look up at the stars. You don't need to go anywhere special to stretch. Wherever your body goes your mind will follow.

### ***11 Equipment Essentials for Everyday Exercises***

**Expand or contract your spiritual rituals.** Some Hindus, Buddhists, Seventh Day Adventists and other religious systems practice vegetarianism because of their spiritual belief systems. In some cases, they also back up their decision with evidence of physical benefits. Many Muslim women veil their bodies, exposing only their eyes and hands. They do it out of obedience to God or their culture. Some say it frees them from being judged by their looks or their body. Their beauty is reserved for their husbands only. Catholics tell their wrong-doings to priests to confess the sins on their conscious. This sacrament reconciles them with God. How are you exercising your spirit? Try practicing some new rituals or letting go of some that don't feel right.

### **3. Generate valuable ideas.**

**Be a curious lifelong learner.** To remain relevant, you need to be willing to do one of two things: adopt to the ways of younger generations or lead change. In some cases it's good to keep doing a thing the same way if it serves you well . . . at least until it doesn't. You need to know when it's time to yield to change. If you like board games, learn a computer game. If you like connecting with people by phone, try texting, [Skyping](#) or doing a group video call in [Google Hangouts](#). If you're passionate about history, find new ways to bring it back to life. Stretch your imagination. Exercise your

freedom to think about anything you want.

**Make a habit of doing things for the first time.** As each new generation comes of age, it comes with its own leaders who have the courage to question status quo. These change-makers bring new ideas, trends, technologies, and more. It's normal to be afraid of trying new things, but it's also one of the best ways to grow and discover treasures that are hiding all around you. Check out this clip. This is the first time I ever spoke to an all-male [Toastmasters](#) club. This is what it's like at the amazing the amazing [Club 1600](#) in the Bahamas . . .

**Open your heart to other belief systems.** Cultural, political, sexual and religious belief systems have been shaping you from the time you were born. Your perception narrows over time unless you take steps to exercise the connection between your conscious and subconscious. When you poo, it doesn't even occur to you that you're sitting rather than squatting. [Are you pooping wrong?](#) How deep is your squat stretch? You do countless activities each day without consciously thinking about the fact that you're doing them, not because you choose to, but because you've been conditioned to conform to the local culture.

### **[Warning: Old People and Frogs May Trigger Culture Shock](#)**

Each time you stretch your body, pay attention to the things going on around you. When you bend over backwards, it seems as if the whole world turns upside down for you. But you were the one who changed, not the world. When you practice stretching your body and reaching out beyond your psychological or spiritual comfort zones, you're preparing yourself to be more adaptable to the inevitable changes that are coming your way whether you like it or not.



Your ability to adapt to changing circumstances may affect your lifespan. How

flexible are you? Your mental, physical and spiritual flexibility measures are either increasing or decreasing little by little on a daily basis. The direction it's moving in each area of your life is up to you.

Many centenarians have confident, robust personalities. They've been able to grow old, in part, because of their flexibility and open-mindedness. They have good self-esteem. They like interacting with others, but they don't like becoming dependent on others.

Flexibility exercises begin in your **mind**. Then they become apparent in your **body** language. And eventually, if everything goes right, the benefits show up in your **spirit**.

