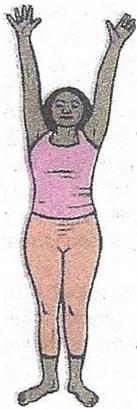


# How to Wake Up Your Body in the Morning

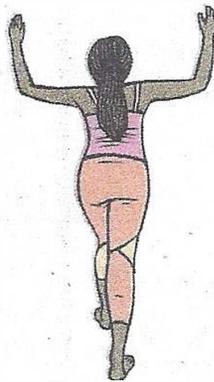
BY GRETCHEN REYNOLDS

**THERE ARE MANY** ways to meet the day, but most of us wake up in need of a little help. While we sleep, our joints can tighten, especially as we age: The tissues and fluids that once lubricated them are more scarce, and we aren't moving or stretching them during sleep. If you don't have the time (or the inclination) for a yoga routine or a run, there are other ways to awaken your

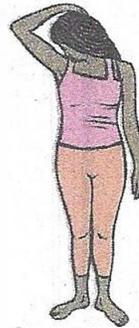
body before a long workday. Situps or other exercises that curl your back can be stressful to your spine — spinal discs swell during the night, so pressure on the discs is two times greater if you bend and twist your spine upon waking up rather than later in the day. These four exercises will help you limber up and prepare your body for a day spent mostly deskbound.



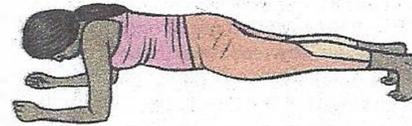
**1. Standing Stretch** Rise from your bed or a chair. With neck straight, raise arms overhead until even with your ears. Hold for 10 seconds. Reach higher and farther back, keeping spine straight. Inhale. Stretch as high as possible. Hold for 10 seconds.



**2. Door-Frame Stretch** Stand, one foot out in front, in a door frame with forearms and palms planted flat against the frame. Slowly lean as far forward as comfortable. Hold at least 10 seconds, switch feet and repeat at least twice.



**3. Neck Stretch** Turn your head to the right, place right hand on your head, slowly bend your head down, as if sniffing your armpit, using your hand to gently press and elongate the stretch. Hold at least 10 seconds. Repeat on left side.



**4. Plank** Lie on your stomach, palms on the floor, feet together. Lift your body on forearms and toes. Keep spine straight. Hold as long as possible. ♦