

Major Muscle Groups

Major Muscle Group	Location	Functional Role	Exercise to Strengthen	Sample Stretch	Notes
Abdominal	Stomach	Sitting up, postural alignment	Crunches, leg raises, twisting crunches	You typically don't stretch your abs. For most people, the abs are not strong enough, so you need to work on strengthening them rather than stretching them	The rectus abdominus is the muscle that is visible. The transversus abdominus muscle, which stabilizes your back is underneath.
Biceps	Front of upper arm	Lifting, pulling	Bicep Curls	Sit on floor. Place hands behind you with fingers pointing away from your body. Walk your hips away from your hands.	Anytime you move your hand towards your shoulder, you are using your biceps.
Deltoids	Top of shoulder	Overhead lifting	Push ups, bench press, side & rear arm raises	"Scratch your Back" - Put both hands over your head. Bend one elbow and place hand on back. With other hand, push elbow to stretch triceps, deltoids, lats	The deltoids are composed of three parts, anterior, posterior & medial. Anytime you "flap" your arms, your deltoids are working.
Erector Spinae	Low back	Postural alignment	back extensions	"Cat Stretch" - Kneel on all fours, round back like a cat. Sit on chair with feet shoulder distance apart. Bend over and place shoulders between your knees	The erector spinae is sometimes called the "low back" muscle, although it runs up your entire back.

Gastrocnemius & Soleus	Back of lower leg	Push off for walking, standing on tiptoes	Standing calf raises, seated calf raises	Lunges with a straight back leg for gastrocnemius. Lunges with bent knees for soleus.	The gastrocnemius give your legs a rounded shape. The soleus is underneath the gastrocnemius.
Gluteus	Buttocks	Climbing stairs, walking, standing up	Squat, leg press	Sit on chair, cross other leg over thigh of bent leg, lean forwards.	Made up of several muscles. The largest muscle in the body is the gluteus maximus.
Hamstrings	Thigh - back	Walking	Squats, lunges, leg extensions, leg curls	While standing, place heel of leg to be stretched on a chair. Keep your leg as straight as possible, your hips square and your back flat. Bend at the waist toward your leg.	The hamstrings are made up of three muscles. Don't squat below 90 degrees, otherwise you could damage your knees.
Latissimus Dorsi & Rhomboids	Back - Lats are the large triangular muscle in the midback. Rhomboids are between the shoulder blades	Postural alignment, pulling open a door	Lats - pull ups, chin ups, lat pull downs Rhomboids - chinups & bent arm rows	"Scratch your Back" - Put both hands over your head. Bend one elbow and place hand on back. With other hand, To stretch rhomboids, "hug yourself" Cross your hands in front of you, place both hands on your shoulder blades.	Developed lats give your back a "V" shape, making your waist appear smaller.
Obliques	Side of body	Rotation and side flexion of body	Twisting crunches, rotary torso	Lie on your back with your arms extended out ("T" shape) Bend both knees.	Strong internal and external oblique

				Rotate your hips and put your bent legs on the floor on your side.	muscles ward off back pain.
Pectoralis	Front of upper chest	Push up from lying position, push open a door	push-up, pull-up, bench press	While standing, hold both arms out at shoulder height, palms forward. Pull arms back.	The pectoralis muscles pull the shoulder and arm forward.
Quadriceps	Thigh - front	Climbing stairs, walking, standing up	Squats, lunges, leg presses	While lying on side, grasp ankle, push hips forward	The quads are made up of four muscles.
Trapezius	Large muscles in upper and mid-back.	Moves head sideways,	upright rows, shoulder shrugs	Upper trap stretch. Sit in a chair, put your left hand behind you. Tilt your head so your right ear moves toward your right shoulder. Repeat on the other side.	Your upper trapezius connects your head to your shoulders. When you feel "knots in your neck", it's your trapezius.
Triceps	Back of upper arm	Pushing	Push ups, tricep extensions, dips	"Scratch your Back" - Put both hands over your head. Bend one elbow and place hand on back. With other hand, push elbow to stretch triceps, deltoids, lats	Anytime you extend your lower arm, you are using your triceps.

