

A Great Place to
Stretch Out!



STRETCH LOUIS

MISSOURI



Welcome to Stretch Louis, Missouri – a great place to stretch out. Enclosed in this travel packet is your new Travel Journal for the month. Continue to log your Frequent Mover Miles and be sure to participate in the “Stretch Out” wellness challenge to log bonus miles!

Like so many of us, residents of this gateway city lead busy lives. They work, tend to their homes and families, and do their best to stay fit and healthy.

A recent survey, however, revealed that while most citizens had made a firm commitment to regularly participate in aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities, one important component of their overall fitness program was missing. Only 10% of adults in this health-minded community reported doing flexibility training. Why is flexibility training important? Let’s take a look at a few of the many benefits of stretching.

- Improves posture
- Encourages greater freedom of movement
- Releases muscle tension
- Promotes a sense of mental and physical relaxation
- Reduces the risk of injury

Now that residents recognize how much they are missing by not making flexibility training part of their fitness routine, they are on a quest to stretch their knowledge about flexibility training. And they’re motivated to share their new wisdom with HealthTrip travelers. Get ready to relax and release your travel tensions, as Stretch Louis rolls out the red Yoga mat for our visit to this exciting city.

CITY FACTS A GREAT PLACE TO STRETCH OUT

City Sites: Static Stretch Stadium, Stretch Louis Zoo

City Challenge: Stretch Out

City History: Known to most as the gateway to healthy living, this signature city boasts a super stretchy arch monument standing 630 feet tall at the entrance to the city. It is the largest national monument in our country and was designed and constructed to be able to twist and sway despite being made of steel. This amazing flexibility allows it to stand strong and withstand high wind forces and even earthquakes.

Stretching for success doesn't need to be complicated. Look to the big cats at nearby Stretch Louis Zoo to learn the ins and outs of proper stretching.

Whether it is a beautiful Bengal tiger, graceful Snow leopard, majestic African lion, or even your domestic furry feline friend at home, all cats seem to garner pure pleasure from stretching.

Wild or housebroken, these elusive creatures rarely emerge from a nap without going to great lengths to stretch out. Certainly it is not unusual to witness cats stretching out legs and paws before and after eating. Simply moving from one sunny spot to the next seems to require a stretching session. In fact, most stretch frequently throughout the day without missing a beat.

When it comes to safe and effective flexibility training, here is what every clever cat and human should know.

Warm up: Stretching cold muscles may increase your risk of injury. Take a few minutes to do a light warm-up prior to stretching. This might include 5-10 minutes of walking, biking, or light calisthenics like jumping jacks.

Breathe: Take a deep breath in and slowly release the breath as you ease into each stretch. Continue normal breathing as you hold the stretch.

Hold and Repeat: Attempt to hold each stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Then repeat each stretch two to four more times to garner improvements in your overall flexibility.

Gentle, Gentle, Gentle: Stretch to the point of gentle tension. If a stretch causes you to feel pain, ease up. Straining or stretching a muscle too far can result in muscular injury.

Stop the Bounce: Bouncing during a stretch is not recommended and may cause injury. Gently hold each stretch to realize long-term flexibility improvements.

FIT TIP

Consider enrolling in a stretching class like Yoga, Pilates, or Tai Chi in order to stick with a consistent stretching routine.



TRAVEL PLANS

Below is a review of our travel rules and regulations. Remember, each month of HealthTrip, you earn Frequent Mover Miles by completing aerobic activities. Bonus miles are earned by completing the feature city challenge.

- **ONLY AEROBIC ACTIVITIES COUNT:** Frequent Mover Miles may be earned by engaging in aerobic activities. Aerobic or "cardio" activity gets you breathing harder and your heart beating faster. A brisk walk, dance class, swimming laps – all of them help you get Frequent Mover Miles!
- **INTENSITY IS IMPORTANT:** Your aerobic activity must be done at moderate or vigorous intensity to count. Moderate-intensity means you're working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat. One way to tell is that you'll be able to talk, but not sing the words to your favorite song. Walking briskly, doing water aerobics, and riding a bike on level ground are examples of moderate-intensity aerobic activities. Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity means you're breathing hard and fast, and your heart rate has gone up quite a bit. If you're working at this level, you will only be able to say a few words before pausing for a breath.
- **TEN MINUTES OR MORE:** It's okay to break your aerobic activity into mini-sessions throughout the day as long as each lasts at least ten minutes.

That's it! All you have to do is record your Frequent Mover Miles daily and return your completed Travel Journal to the HealthTrip travel agent at the end of the month!



FLEXIBILITY MADE FUN

All one has to do is take a look around Stretch Louis to see that flexibility training is quickly catching on!

Residents are standing up straighter because their backs feel better. There are more smiles on faces than ever before as regular stretching has made muscle tension a thing of the past. And the waiting rooms in area orthopedic clinics are barren as the rate of everyday injuries in this city has plummeted.

While stretching classes aren't for everyone, the residents of Stretch Louis will be the first to say that group classes inspire proper stretching technique and help you maintain a habit of regularly stretching.

If your stretching routine lacks consistency, why not try out one of the following group stretching class ideas below? It could be your most stretch-tacular idea yet!

YOGA

An ancient eastern practice, Yoga promotes slow gentle stretching with deep breathing. And in a world often filled with excess noise and chaos, Yoga is a welcome form of exercise as it works to quiet the mind and release tension in the body. This, in turn, creates calm and relaxation. There are a variety of types of Yoga to choose from and most classes require only a Yoga mat.

TAI CHI

Often referred to as moving meditation, Tai Chi involves a series of movements or postures performed slowly and sequentially. The gentle movements stretch the muscles and calm the mind. Ideal for enhancing flexibility and reducing stress levels, Tai Chi can be mastered by individuals of all ages and ability levels.

PILATES

This unique exercise system emphasizes mindfulness while performing exercises that involve the entire body. Pilates strengthens the core, enhances balance, and promotes overall flexibility through a well-designed program of strengthening and stretching exercises. Classes may focus solely on mat exercises or include exercises using the Pilates reformer equipment.

WARM WATER AQUATIC EXERCISE

Performed in a warm water environment, these group classes feature gentle stretching and muscle strengthening exercises. Overall flexibility improves as joints are able to move more easily in the water and the warm water increases blood flow to the muscles. Much to the surprise of many, you do not need to know how to swim to enjoy the benefits of a warm water aquatic exercise class. The water height is chest deep and no swimming is required.

WELLNESS CHALLENGE STRETCH LOUIS

Stretch Out: Regular stretching is the key to maintaining good overall flexibility. Regrettably, it is often the most frequently neglected component of a fitness program.

During our stay in Stretch Louis, the HealthTrip travel group has the opportunity to take the Stretch Out wellness challenge and begin establishing a regular habit of flexibility training. And all it takes is 5-10 minutes of your time each day to get started!

To earn one bonus mile per day, the traveler is required to stretch for at least five minutes each day. The traveler chooses which stretches to do, when to stretch, and where to stretch. Refer to the educational resources in this month's travel packet for more information about how to stretch safely and effectively.



Time to hit the road toward optimum health. On your Travel Journal, award yourself one mile for each minute of aerobic activity you complete each day, and up to one mile per day for completing the challenge. **Your goal is to rack up 600 miles!** Remember to return your Travel Journal to your Travel Guide!

Aerobic Activity

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	TOTAL	

Challenge Activity

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	TOTAL	

NAME: _____ EMAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

TOTAL: _____