Stretch Band Relief

**AGE/GRADE LEVEL:** Teens; Adults and Older Adults

**FORMATION:** Seated in a circle of chairs

**EQUIPMENT:** Stretch (resistance) bands of 4-6 feet length for each participant

**RULES/DIRECTIONS:**
1. Teacher reviews posture tips for seated position from Healthy & Fit on the Go: Resistance Bands (on back).
2. Teacher leads participants through selected Healthy & Fit on the Go exercises; remind participants to perform only as many repetitions as is comfortable.
3. For stretching and/or relaxing the upper back and neck:
   - Hold the band, one end in each hand.
   - Loop the center of the band across upper back.
   - Slowly straighten arms out to the front while sitting straight.
   - Release and repeat.
   - Slowly straighten arms out to the sides while sitting straight.
4. Invite participants to experiment with the bands and share an exercise or movement that helps to stretch or relax the neck and upper back.

**VARIATION:** Exercises and stretches can be performed from standing position.

**NUTRITION NOTE:** Use with a lesson on physical activity to promote a healthy lifestyle.
**HEALTHY & FIT ON THE GO: RESISTANCE BANDS**

Also available at [http://www.extension.umn.edu/Health/healthy-fit-go.html](http://www.extension.umn.edu/Health/healthy-fit-go.html).

**Chest:** Wrap ends of band around each hand; raise bent elbows out to the sides, palms down. Straighten arms to the count of 3; resist and count to 3 as you return to bent elbow starting position.

**Upper Back:** Wrap ends of band around each hand; raise bent elbows out to the sides, palms down. Lay your chest on your knees; place feet on the center of the band. Slowly squeeze your elbows together and return to starting position.

**Shoulders:** Sit straight. Keeping band under feet, lock your wrists and raise and lower straight arms from the front corners of the chair to a “V” at shoulder level.

**Biceps:** With band under feet, squeeze your elbows to your ribs, arms bent, palms up; curl your hands up to your shoulders and lower slowly.

**Triceps:** Place feet on one end of the band. Hold the other end behind your head with both hands; squeeze your head with your elbows; raise and lower hands to straighten and bend at elbow.

**Abdomen:** Without your band, sit straight in chair. Tighten abdominal muscles (pull belly button toward spine). Lean body back about 10 degrees and straighten your legs, hands resting on chair. Slowly lift one knee toward chest and lower. Lift other leg toward chest and lower. Repeat 10 times.

**Lower Back:** Wrap ends of band around hands with middle of band under your feet. Lay your chest on your knees; squeeze your ribs with your elbows, and lock your arms in the bent elbow position. Using your waist as the hinge, slowly raise your body to a seated position. Lower slowly and repeat. Keep your abdominal muscles tight throughout the range of motion to protect back.

**Thighs:** Set left foot on one end of the band. Wrap the other end around right foot while sitting upright, arms resting at sides, knees pointed forward. Slowly raise and lower right foot to straight leg position. Push heel down first as you lower your foot. Switch sides and repeat with left leg.

**Hips:** Set left foot on one end of the band. Wrap the other end around right foot while sitting upright, arms resting at sides, knees pointed forward. Straighten right leg and slowly push your ankle out to the side. Slowly return to front; repeat 10 times. Switch sides.

**Calves:** Wrap one end of band around each hand. Put right foot in center of band; hold your leg straight out to the front. Slowly point your toe away from you, pull toes up to point to the ceiling. Repeat 10 times and switch legs.