

BENEFITS OF STRETCHING

1. Enhanced physical fitness
2. Reduce risk of muscle injury
3. Improved nerve and muscle coordination
4. Improved balance and postural awareness
5. Reduced muscle soreness
6. Improves blood circulation and nutrients to joint structures
7. Decreased risk of low-back pain/ injury
8. Reduced severity of painful menstruation in women
9. Increased flexibility
10. Stress relief



PROPER TECHNIQUE FOR STRETCHING

ALWAYS START WITH A WARM UP

Stretching muscles when they're cold increases the risk of pulled muscles. Imagine stretching a rubber band that came out of a freezer. It will most likely snap when it is stretched. Warm up by walking, or performing another aerobic exercise at low intensity for five minutes to ten minutes.



HOLD EACH STRETCH FOR AT LEAST 30 SECONDS

It takes time to lengthen muscle tissues safely. Hold stretches for at least 30 seconds to maintain flexibility. To increase flexibility hold a stretch for a full minute.



AVOID BOUNCING

Ballistic stretching, is bouncing throughout the stretch. It can cause small tears in the muscle, which leave scar tissue as the muscle heals. The scar tissue tightens the muscle even further, making them less flexible and more prone to pain.



RELAX AND BREATHE FREELY

Don't hold your breath while you're stretching. Take a deep breath before you go into a stretch. Then, exhale as you begin to reach into the stretch. Exhaling will help relax the body and muscles and you will be able to get a deeper stretch. While holding the stretch, breath normally. Make sure you never hold your breath.

STRETCH BOTH SIDES

Balance is a major factor of muscle flexibility. A balance of flexibility should be equal on each side. If there is an unbalance, the muscles can pull harder on one side of a bone or joint and this can cause injury, tightness, and, depending on the muscle, sometimes back pain. Be sure to stretch each side for an equal time and work on the less flexible side more if needed.



STRETCH BEFORE AND AFTER ACTIVITY

Light stretching is important after your warm-up in order to prepare your muscles for activity and reduce chances of injury. After your workout it is critical that you thoroughly stretch, because it can help reduce soreness from your workout. You will definitely thank yourself the next morning!



UPPER BODY STRETCHES



ARM EXTENSION

Stretches: Chest, Anterior Deltoid
Execution: Clasp hands behind the back, standing up tall looking straight ahead, holding abs tight.



HORIZONTAL ADDUCTION

Stretches: Deltoids (Shoulder)
Execution: Keeping both shoulders down, bring the arm across the chest and clasp the wrist with the opposite hand.



SCAPULAR ABDUCTION

Stretches: Upper Back
Execution: Keep the shoulders down away from the ears, extend the arms while gently rounding the upper back.. Imagine separating the shoulder blades. Maintain a tight core through out the stretch.



FOREARM FLEXION

Stretches: Posterior Forearm
Execution: Stand up tall with the shoulders down away from the ears. Extend the arm pointing the fingers to the floor. With the opposite hand, press the fingers toward the body.



FOREARM EXTENSION

Stretches: Anterior Forearm
Execution: Stand up tall with the shoulders down away from the ears. Extend the arm pointing the fingers to the ceiling. With the opposite hand, pull the fingers back toward the body.

LOWER BODY STRETCHES



STANDING QUADRICEPS

Stretches: Quadriceps

Execution: Standing on one leg, bend the opposite knee bringing the heel towards the buttocks. To keep balance, tighten the abs and stand up tall. During the stretch, keep both knees next to each other.



STANDING CALF

Stretches: Calf

Execution: Place one foot up on a wedge or the wall. The heel should be pressed into the ground while the toe is pointed up. Maintain proper standing posture throughout the stretch.



SEATED HAMSTRING

Stretches: Hamstrings & Lower Back

Execution: Sit up tall, elongating the spine. Bending at the hips, slowly reach towards the toes. Throughout the stretch, keep the abs tight and shoulders down away from the ears.



V SIT

Stretches: Hamstrings, Inner Thighs & Lower Back

Execution: Sit up tall, elongating the spine. Bending at the hips, slowly reach towards the toes. Throughout the stretch, keep the abs tight and shoulders down away from the ears.

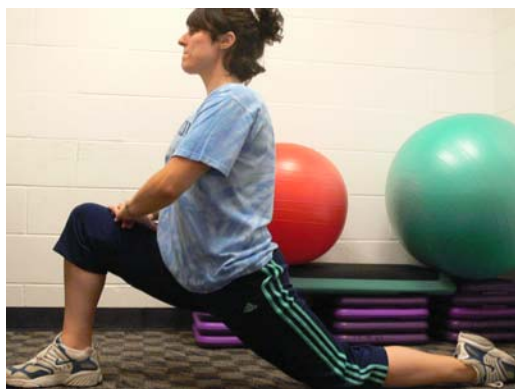
LYING FIGURE FOUR

Stretches: Gluteus

Execution: Lying on the back, bend the knee and put the opposite foot on the top of the opposite knee. Wrap the hands around your vertical leg and pull the leg toward the body.



HIP FLEXOR AND LOWER BACK STRETCHES



HIP FLEXOR LUNGE

Stretches: Hip flexor muscles

Key: Begin in a lunge with one knee on the floor and the other in front of you in a straight line with the ankle. Lean into the bent front leg and focus on pushing the hips down.



KNEES TO CHEST

Stretches: Lower back

Execution: Lying on your back, slowly bring the knees to the chest, grasping underneath the knees.



Childs' Pose

Stretches: Lower back

Key: Sitting on your shins, press the buttocks back on to the heels. Stretch the arms out in front and rest the forehead on the floor.

SEATED TRUNK ROTATION



(Front View)



(Back View)

Key: Sit on the floor, extend the right leg and cross the left leg over the right. Place the left elbow on the right thigh. Sit up tall with the spine elongated. Repeat on the other side.