

STRETCHING

PERFORMANCE

RECOVERY

PREVENTION



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What to stretch and for how long

Benefits of stretching

- Improves your performance
- Decreases risk of activity-based injuries
- Improves flexibility - better flexibility may improve your performance
- Improved movement & posture (help joints move through their full range of motion)
and enhances muscle co-ordination
- Stretching also increases blood flow to the muscle - speeds up recovery
- Release tension and relaxes muscles
Lowers potential soreness over the next few days



When to stretch

- **Stretching before and after a work-out is essential**
Boosts the **PERFORMANCE** of the exercise you are doing
Exercising without stretching is 30% less effective on your body than when you do a short warm up and cool down routine that involves stretching your muscles.
- **Stretching muscles before a work out helps loosen them up**
Allows more oxygen to reach the muscles, which also promotes strong, healthy ligaments.
- **Tensing and relaxing your muscles during a pre-workout stretch routine helps blood circulate better**
Heart rate increases and pumps blood more efficiently. Increased circulation promotes an overall healthy body. When your heart performs better, oxygen can travel through your body faster.
- **Post exercise stretching is even more beneficial**
Stretching muscles after activity will allow them to release tension and relax, reducing risk of soreness **speed up recovery** keeping your training and progress on track.

Warm up stretches

Stretching should become a regular routine for everyone, not just for professional athletes who already understand the benefits associated with performing a sequence of muscle stretches.

Some of these benefits of warm up stretches are physically apparent, such as a greater range of movement; while others can't be seen, but are felt from within, such as an increased feeling of relaxation and general wellbeing.

Once you can see and feel the benefits of something, it is much easier to stay motivated and to continue with it, stretching your muscles prior and after your workout / sport will assist you in greater performance and reduce injury.

Warm down stretches

On completion of your workout or sporting activity, it's important to bring your heart rate back down slowly and gradually prior to easing into a number of suitable stretches.

In your cool down period, keep moving such as walking at the end of your run, to prevent your muscles from becoming locked up by blood pooling - (basically poor blood flow).

When you train, the cool down is almost important as the warm up. However hot you feel, it's worth wearing warm clothing if it's cold in order to keep the muscles warm prior and during your stretching.

When you do cool down stretches, hold each stretch for a minimum of 20-30 seconds, breath comfortably, with deep breaths through your nose, and out via your mouth. Stretch movements should be slow and controlled building on each stretch a little further and easier.

How to Stretch

make it part of the routine

For best results stretching should be performed after “warm up” and after “warm down”

Warm Up:

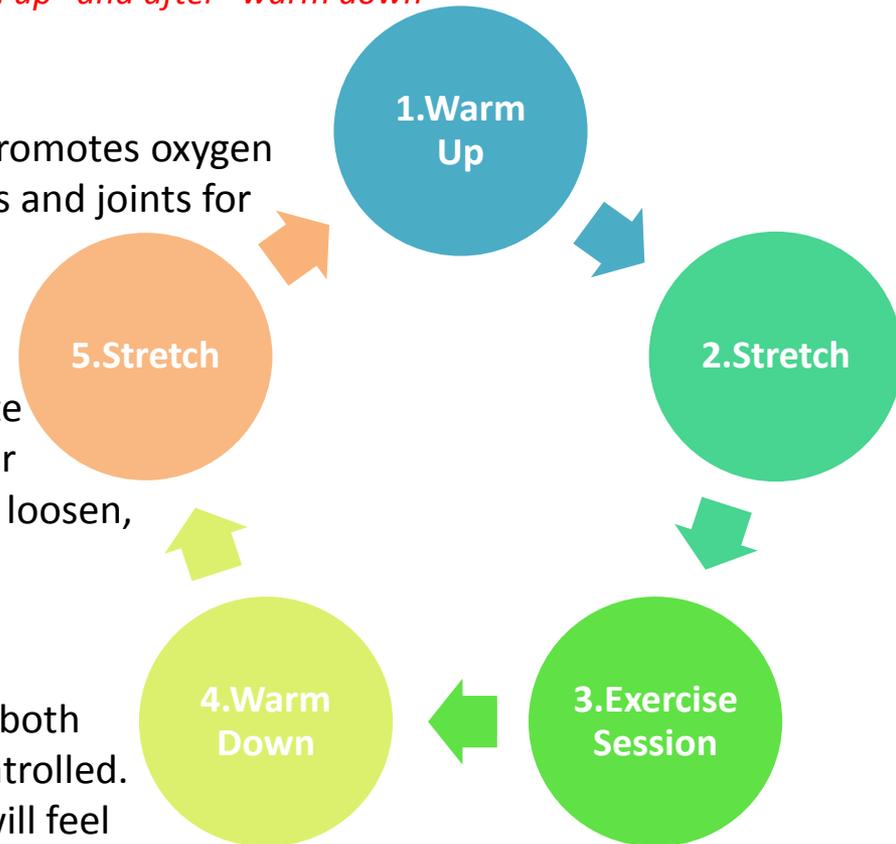
Heats up body temperature, increases blood flow, promotes oxygen supply to the muscles and helps focus mind, muscles and joints for the physical exercise to come

Warm Down:

Prevents blood from pooling in your limbs, and waste products, such as lactic acid, from building up in your muscles. Helps your muscles and tendons relax and loosen, stopping them from becoming stiff and tight.

Stretching Techniques:

Balanced stretching - always stretch the muscles on both sides evenly. Avoid over-stretching ! **Go slow** & controlled. Never stretch to the point of pain/discomfort, you will feel slight tension or a pull on the muscle at the peak of a stretch. Hold the stretch about 15 seconds and repeat 3 times. Never bounce or jerk while stretching. This can cause injury as a muscle is pushed beyond its ability. All stretches should be smooth and slow. Don't forget to breathe! Flexibility exercises should be relaxing. Deep, easy breathing is essential for relaxing nerves and pressure on the back.



RUNNERS

10 minute head to toe routine

