



Stretching & Flexibility

Flexibility is the ability to move a joint through its full range of motion. Stretching is one of the basic components of a sound exercise program. Good flexibility is not only important for exercise, but also for daily activities such as bending down to put on socks or reaching overhead to grab a tool in your garage. Regular stretching should be a part of your daily exercise routine.

Why should I stretch?

- To improve joint range of motion
- To improve muscle performance
- To promote better circulation
- To reduce the chance of muscular injuries
- To help prevent muscle stiffness and soreness
- To help reduce tension and to encourage relaxation
- To help you develop better awareness of your body

When should I stretch?

- To loosen your muscles, stretch after you warm-up but before you begin your physical activity.
- To increase your flexibility and improve your range of motion, stretch after your physical activity.
- Stretching can be done anytime, anywhere (as long as you're warmed up). Aim to stretch most days of the week, especially after your activity, even if you don't have time to exercise.

How do I stretch?

- Stretch in a slow relaxed manner
- Stretch until you feel a slight discomfort (not pain) in the muscle
- Hold each stretch for at least 15-60 seconds
- Don't bounce
- Repeat each stretch one or more times
- Breathe normally

What do I stretch?

- Focus on any area that is particularly tight
- Focus on the muscles you are going to use or have used during your activity

For a quick and easy stretching routine see the pictures on the back of this fact sheet or check our stretching booklet for the following stretches:

Standing-

- Chest: pecs
- Legs: groin
- Arms: Biceps
- Legs: hamstrings
- Arms: Triceps
- Legs: quadriceps
- Legs: calves
- Back: lumbar extensors

Disclaimer: This document is for informational purposes only and is not intended to take the place of the care and attention of your personal physician or other professional medical services. Talk with your doctor if you have Questions about individual health concerns or specific treatment options.

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