

Dynamic Stretching

Dynamic stretching is different from the usual "static" stretching, the stretch position is not held. This method of stretching is movement-based, it uses the muscles to bring about a stretch. It's different from traditional "static" stretching because the stretch position is not held.

A static stretch, like touching your toes, may help you feel loose, whereas dynamic stretching better prepares your body for the different types of movement you will use in your upcoming workout.

Examples of dynamic stretching:

Runner's Lunge

► (5 reps each side)



Benefits?

Contrary to the name, the runner's lunge is designed for everyone. This stretch opens your hip flexors and stretches your lower body.

Let's do It!

1. Place one foot forward (in a lunge position) and both hands on either side of your foot.
2. The other leg should be extended back and balanced on toes, or if needed, with your knee on the floor. If you need added balance, place both hands on your front bent knee.
3. Hold for 15 seconds, then switch sides.

Bum Kicks

► (1 minute)



Benefits?

This exercise warms up and stretches the quads, hamstrings, and glutes.

Let's do It!

1. Start by standing tall with your back straight and your chest out.
2. Bring one heel off the floor toward your glutes, while the opposite hand comes up toward your shoulder like running arms.
3. Switch to the other side.
4. This exercise can be done at any speed and can also be done in place or moving forward.

Lateral Band Walk

► (10 reps each side)



Benefits?

Lateral band walking warms up the muscles that stabilize the hips and pelvis. It is especially beneficial before activities that require running, jumping, twisting, or pivoting. This exercise can help increase hip stability, strengthen hip abductors, and increase stability of the knee joint.

Let's do It!

1. Using a small loop resistance band, position the band around both legs, just above your ankles.
2. With feet shoulder-width apart, bend knees slightly in a half-squat position.
3. Take 5 steps sideways, then switch direction, shifting weight as you go.
4. Keep hips level while moving.

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Stretching & flexibility



► Help keep your muscles flexible, strong, & healthy!

Why Stretch?

There is always talk about the importance of exercise, but what about stretching?

When thinking about stretching, you may think it is only needed for certain activities or sports. In actuality, we all need to stretch to protect our mobility and independence.

Stretching keeps the muscles flexible, strong, and healthy, and we need that flexibility to maintain a range of motion in the joints. Without it, the muscles shorten and become tight. Muscle tightness increases the risk of joint pain, strains, and muscle damage when you try to use those muscle for an activity.

What Are Some Benefits of Stretching?

When it comes to the benefits of stretching, studies have determined an assortment of results. Some researchers state that stretching does not reduce muscle soreness after exercise. Other research has indicated that stretching can help improve flexibility, and the range of motion of joints.

Improved flexibility can:

- ✓ Increase your performance during physical activity
- ✓ Decrease your possibility of injury
- ✓ Increase muscle blood flow
- ✓ Allow your muscles to work more efficiently
- ✓ Improve your capability to do daily activities

Essentials to Stretching

Before stretching, make sure you do it safely and effectively. Proper technique is key!

Tips to keep stretching safe:

- ✓ **Remember, stretching is not a warmup.** Before stretching, warm up with walking, jogging or biking at low intensity for 5 to 10 minutes. Think about skipping stretching before an intense activity, such as sprinting and field activities. Some research implies that pre-event stretching may decrease performance.



✓ Make symmetry the goal.

Everyone's flexibility capability is different. Rather than trying to achieve the flexibility level of someone else, attempt to have equal flexibility on both sides of your body. Flexibility that is not equal on both sides can increase the risk for injury.

✓ Pay attention to the major muscle groups.

Concentrate stretches on the major muscle groups such as your calves, thighs, hips, lower back, neck, and shoulders. When stretching it is important to stretch both sides. Stretch muscles and joints that you regularly use in your activities.

✓ No bouncing.

When stretching make sure it is a smooth movement and you are not bouncing. Bouncing can damage your muscle and add to muscle tightness.

✓ Hold your stretch.

As you stretch, breathe naturally, and hold each stretch for about 30 seconds. You may want to consider holding each stretch for about 60 seconds in problem areas.

✓ Pain is not the goal.

Feeling tension is expected, but not pain. If it hurts, then you have pushed too far and need to back off until it is no longer causing any pain, then hold the stretch from there.

✓ Be consistent with stretching.

Though it can add time to your routine, stretching is most beneficial when it is done regularly, at least two to three times a week. Even 5 to 10 minutes of stretching at a time can be valuable.

Stretching Exercises for Flexibility

Yoga

Yoga not only improves your balance and flexibility, but it also helps you feel stronger and more mentally focused.

Taking a yoga basics class once or twice per week will assist with stretching your muscles as they become more tense from your daily routine. You can decide to do whole body movements that focus on stretching multiple areas of your body at once, or specific yoga poses that focus on specific areas like your hips, back or shoulders.

Examples of yoga positions:

Mountain Pose



Benefits? This stance is the foundation for other positions that require awareness and balance.

Let's do It!

1. Stand with feet together and arms at your side.
2. Ground your feet, making sure to press all four corners down into the ground.
3. Next, straighten your legs, then tuck your tailbone in as you engage your thigh muscles.
4. As you inhale, elongate through your torso and extend your arms up, then out.
5. Exhale and release your shoulder blades away from your head, toward the back of your waist as you release arms back to your sides.

Downward-Facing Dog



Benefits? Downward dog is a wonderful way to stretch your back, shoulders, arms, hamstrings and, everything else on your body. It also helps get you calm and centered.

Let's do It!

1. Come onto hands and knees with palms just past your shoulders, fingers pointing forward. Knees should be under your hips and toes tucked.
2. Lift your hips and press back into an A-shaped position with your body. Feet should be hip width apart. Keep in mind, it's OK if you can't get your heels to the floor (your hamstrings might be too tight).
3. Spread your hands and feet through all 10 fingers and toes and press your chest towards your legs.