

Stretching

For: ~~Shannon Levine McFadden~~

- Pectoralis stretch:

Stand in a doorway or corner with both arms on the wall slightly above your head. Slowly lean forward until you feel a stretch in the front of your shoulders. Hold 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

- Wrist stretch:

With one hand, help to bend the opposite wrist down by pressing the back of your hand and holding it down for 15 to 30 seconds. Next, stretch the hand back by pressing the fingers in a backward direction and holding it for 15 to 30 seconds. Keep your elbow straight during this exercise. Do 3 sets on each hand.

- Gluteal stretch:

Lying on your back with both knees bent, rest the ankle of one leg over the knee of your other leg. Grasp the thigh of the bottom leg and pull that knee toward your chest. You will feel a stretch along the buttocks and possibly along the outside of your hip on the top leg. Hold this for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

- Lower trunk rotation:

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Tighten your abdominal muscles and push your lower back into the floor. Keeping your shoulders down flat, gently rotate your legs to one side, then to the other side as far as you can. Repeat 10 to 20 times.

- Standing calf stretch:

Facing a wall, put your hands against the wall at about eye level. Keep one leg back with the heel on the floor, and the other leg forward. Turn your back foot slightly inward (as if you were pigeon-toed) as you slowly lean into the wall until you feel a stretch in the back of your calf. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times. Do this exercise several times each day.

- Hip adductor stretch:

Lie on your back, bend your knees, and put your feet flat on the floor. Gently spread your knees apart, stretching the muscles on the inside of your thigh. Hold this for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

- Hip flexor stretch:

Kneel, then put your one leg forward, with the foot resting flat on the floor. From this position, tighten your stomach muscles, flatten your

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For: ~~Shannon Louise Maffett~~

lower back and lean your hips forward slightly until you feel a stretch at the front of your hip. Try to keep your body upright as you do this. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times on each side.

- Quadriceps stretch:

Stand an arm's length away from the wall, facing straight ahead. Brace yourself by keeping one hand against the wall. With your other hand, grasp the ankle of the opposite leg and pull your heel toward your buttocks. Don't arch or twist your back. Keep your knees together. Hold this stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times on each side.

- Scalene stretch:

This stretches the neck muscles that attach to your ribs. Sitting in an upright position, clasp both hands behind your back, lower your left shoulder, and tilt your head toward the right. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds and then come back to the starting position. Lower your right shoulder and tilt your head toward the left until you feel a stretch. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times on each side.

- Standing hamstring stretch:

Place the heel of your leg on a stool about 15 inches high. Keep your knee straight. Lean forward, bending at the hips until you feel a mild stretch in the back of your thigh. Make sure you do not roll your shoulders and bend at the waist when doing this or you will stretch your lower back instead. Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times for each leg.

What is the benefit of stretching?

The main purpose of stretching is to increase your range of motion within a muscle or joint.

Some of the benefits of stretching include:

- increases flexibility
- reduces risk for injury
- improves circulation
- decreases anxiety and stress
- relaxes muscles
- can give you an overall feeling of well being
- reduces muscle imbalance.

When should I stretch?

Muscles are more easily stretched when they are warm. A

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short warm-up period of 5 to 10 minutes of walking, bicycling, or jogging in place will warm up your muscles enough so that you can stretch them well. It is best if you can stretch every day. It is especially important to stretch before and after weightlifting, running, or participating in any sport. Stretching before an activity improves flexibility and reduces your risk of injury. Stretching after workouts helps to relax the muscles and reduce soreness.

How should I stretch?

There are several methods that can be used for stretching but the safest and most popular method involves static stretching. With static stretching, your muscle is slowly lengthened to the point where you feel a mild stretch. You then hold the position for 15 to 30 seconds and then slowly release the stretch. The most important rule to follow for any stretching exercise is that it must not be painful. If you stretch to the point of pain, the muscle will not relax and might even become tighter!

To stretch safely follow these rules:

- Never force a stretch - it should always be pain-free.
- Never stretch when your muscles are cold.
- Stretching should be avoided if you have just injured a muscle or joint and there is noticeable swelling or bruising in the area.
- Use extra caution if you have osteoporosis or have been using steroid medicine for a long period of time.
- Avoid stretching in the area of a recent fracture.

What stretches should I do?

For a general stretching program, try to stretch all the major muscles of the body. If you are getting ready for a certain activity (such as, running, tennis, walking, etc.), make sure you stretch the areas of your body that will be used in that activity.

Basic Stretches

These basic exercises will stretch many of your major muscle groups.

- **Double knee to chest:**
Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Tighten your abdominal

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muscles and push your lower back into the floor. Pull both knees up to your chest. Hold for 5 seconds and repeat 10 to 20 times.

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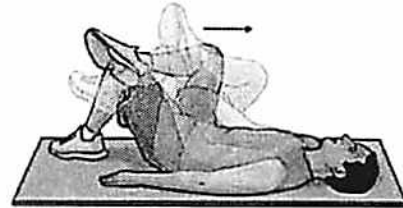
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Stretching



Hip flexor stretch



Gluteal stretch



Hip adductor stretch



Lower trunk rotation



Double knee to chest