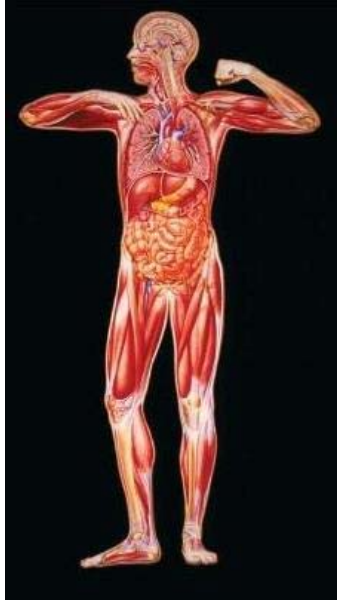




Stretching Guide



Why stretch?

Stretching helps to keep muscles supple, increase the range of joint motion, enhances flexibility, improves coordination and prevents injuries. Omitting stretching from your exercise routine may lead to stiff and sore muscles, which may keep you from working out tomorrow!

When should I stretch?

It is a good idea to stretch after warm-up, and during and after exercising. While exercising, your muscles will tighten and shorten from contractions so it is essential that you stretch during and after your workout.

How long should it take?

Perform each stretching exercise 3 to 5 times. Slowly stretch into the desired position, to the point of mild tension in your muscles, going as far as possible without pain, and hold the stretch for 15 to 20 seconds. Relax the stretch and then repeat.

Remember: Never stretch to the point of pain! The right way to stretch your muscles is to go slow and relax. Do not bounce during the stretch or you may overstretch or pull the muscle, which may cause damage.

Lower Body

Hamstrings

The first hamstring stretch is a standing stretch. Place your heel of the foot on a ledge/step as shown in Figure 1. Make sure your back and the leg on the ledge/step are straight. Lean the head and chest towards the foot on the ledge/step until you feel a comfortable stretch. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat stretch with the other leg.



Figure 1

For the second hamstring stretch, lie on your back, keeping your back flat and your eyes focused upward as shown in Figure 2. Grasp the back of one thigh with both your hands and (leg bent) pull that thigh into a 90-degree position from the floor. Then slowly straighten your knee. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat stretch with other leg.

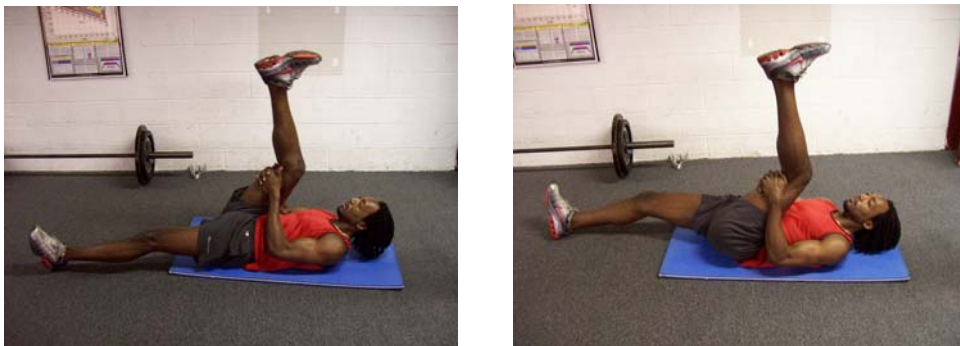


Figure 2

The third hamstring stretch is known as the Cross Leg Stretch. Cross your legs as shown in Figure 3, making sure feet are evenly spaced. Bend down as far as your range will allow. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat stretch with other leg crossed.

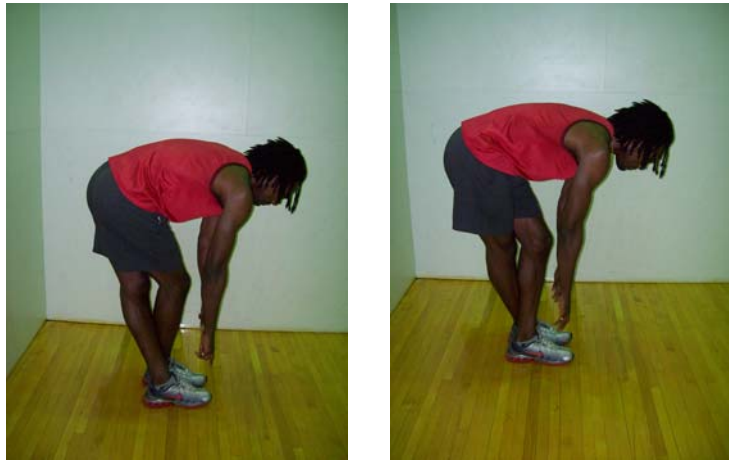


Figure 3

Quadriceps

The first quadriceps stretch is the Quad Bend. Put one hand on a stationary object for balance use the opposite hand to grasp the leg around the ankle, lifting it toward your buttocks as shown in Figure 4. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat stretch with other leg.



Figure 4

In the second quadriceps stretch, stand with your back straight and knee bent as shown in Figure 5. Place your foot on a table or chair, keeping your thigh pointing straight down. Squeeze your behind together and shift your hips forward slightly until you feel a stretch along the front of your thigh. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat stretch with other leg.



Figure 5

This stretching guide contains basic instructions and images demonstrating each stretch. Ask Sean for a complete demonstration!
Remember, always check with your physician before engaging in any exercise program

Calf Muscles

For the first calf muscle stretch, stand on a step as shown in Figure 6. Use your hand to balance yourself on a stationary object such as the stair railing. While standing on the balls of your feet, drop your heels down from the step. A variation of the stretch, which does not require the use of a step, is shown in Figure 7.



Figure 6



Figure 7

For the second calf muscle stretch, lean forward against a wall with both palms against the wall as shown in Figure 8. The leg you want to stretch is back, several feet from the wall, with your heel firmly positioned on the floor. Your other leg is flexed about halfway between your back leg and the wall. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat stretch with other leg.



Figure 8

Hips

The first hip stretch is the Hip Lunge. Lean forward with the leg on a ledge/step as shown in Figure 9. Shift hips forward. Take the arm opposite of the leg that is on the ledge/step and extend across the body. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat stretch with other leg.



Figure 9

For the second hip stretch, start by positioning your legs and feet facing forward as shown in Figure 10. Lunge forward on front leg while keeping the back foot on the ground. Extend on the toes on the back foot but maintain contact with the ground. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat stretch with other leg.



Figure 10

Lower Back

To stretch the lower back, stand a few feet away from a vertical pole and wrap your hands around it. Place your hands just below shoulder level. Lean back with the arms straight and with your legs slightly bent until you feel a good pull all along the back of your body as shown in Figure 11.



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Figure 11

Abdominals

Lie on floor or mat with stomach down. Position your hands on the floor outside your shoulders. Push torso up keeping pelvis in contact with the floor as shown in Figure 12. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds.



Figure 12

Upper Body

Biceps and Chest

Stand with your back to a vertical pole. Extend arms back and grab the pole. Push head and chest up by leaning away from pole coming up on your toes as shown in Figure 13.



Figure 13

Triceps

Put one arm over your head and position forearm as close as possible to upper arm. Grasp elbow over your head with other hand. Pull elbow back and toward head as shown in Figure 14. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat stretch with other arm.



Figure 14

Shoulders

Hold your left arm just above the elbow with the right hand. Now gently pull elbow toward opposite shoulder as shown in Figure 15. Look over shoulder for deeper stretch. Hold for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat stretch with other arm.



Figure 15