

Flexibility & Stretching

General Stretching Guidelines

- Flexibility, in general, can safeguard you from injury and promote optimal muscle function and strength
- Pre-event stretching has not been shown scientifically to prevent injury but does help with physiological effects such as recovery as well as mental preparation for an event.
- During static stretching a strong but comfortable muscle pull should be felt. The stretch should be PAINFREE.
- Do not bounce while holding the developmental or maintenance stretch, this causes the muscles to recoil and assume a position which is shorter than when stretching began, therefore not allowing flexibility to be neither maintained nor developed. Bouncing may be used as a routine part of your sport specific warm-up.

Maintenance (“Pre event/Post Warm-Up” or “Post Event”)

When to:

- **Maintenance** stretching is designed to maintain the flexibility you already have. The main idea is to get the “crimp” out of the muscles allowing the muscle fibres to straighten and align properly. Crimp in muscle & tendon fibres is the natural waves in the collagen permitting elasticity.
- No change in flexibility occurs with maintenance stretching

How to:

- 1-2 Reps x 10-15secs (as desired)

Developmental (“Post Event” or “Before Bed”)

When to:

- When you want to change muscle length thus **developing** flexibility in the muscle
- Developmental stretches are great to do after activity when muscles are warm. Capitalize on the warm muscles to make long term improvements in muscle length and flexibility. However, if exercise is intense, there is an increase in fluid in the muscles which make them resistant to stretching; therefore developmental stretches are not ideal at this time.
- Developmental stretches are great to do before bed. Once going to bed, the muscles are allowed to stay relaxed therefore more effectively maintaining the muscle length just created.

Cautions:

- Developmental stretching can cause micro damage to the muscles when creating muscle length. The micro tears in the muscles and tendons can cause a weakness in the muscle until the body is able to repair the micro tears which usually takes approx 12-24 hours.
- Don't introduce new flexibility stretches or programs before an event. Your body needs time to adjust to the new muscle length and can cause muscle weakness thus increasing risk of injury.

How to:

- 3 Reps x 30-60secs (1-2x/day)



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