

Basic Stretches

Stretching is important for both training and competition as it reduces the chance of injury. Without stretching, muscles lose flexibility and may not respond when being used and injury may result.

The seven rules of stretching to ensure maximum safety:

- Warm up prior to stretching.
- Stretch before and after exercise.
- Stretch all muscle groups that will be involved in the activity.
- Stretch gently and slowly.
- Never bounce or stretch rapidly.
- Stretch to the point of tension or discomfort, never pain.
- Do not hold your breath when stretching, breathing should be slow and easy.

[Reference: Safety Guidelines for Children in Sport and Recreation - Sport Medicine Australia / Australian Coaching Council]



1. Calf Stretch : Leaning against a fence, with both feet apart and pointing forward, bend the front leg slowly forward keeping the back leg straight and the back heel on the ground. Hold the stretch for 8 - 10 seconds, then change legs.



2. Quadriceps Stretch : Standing on one leg, pull the foot of the opposite leg up to the buttock. Standing straight, pull the knee back stretching the quadriceps. Hold for 8 - 10 seconds then change legs.



3. Hamstring Stretch : With one leg on the ground place the other on top of the fence. Straighten the leg and bend slowly forward keeping the back straight, lowering the chest towards the knee. Hold the stretch for 8 - 10 seconds then change legs.



4. Hamstring Stretch : Sitting on the ground with legs straight, bend slowly forward and hold onto toes (if possible). Hold for 8 - 10 seconds.



5. Hamstring Stretch : Lying on the back, keep one leg straight on the ground and pull the opposite knee slowly towards the chest. Hold for 8 - 10 seconds and change legs.



6. Lower Back Stretch : Lying on the back, bring one knee up to the chest and draw it across the other leg, keeping both shoulders on the ground and the head facing the opposite direction to the bent knee. Hold for 8 - 10 seconds. Swap sides.



7. Lower Back Stretch : Sitting on the ground. cross one leg over the other. Turn the upper body and face the opposite direction to that of the bent knee hooking the elbow across the knee to give support. Hold for 8 - 10 seconds. Swap legs.



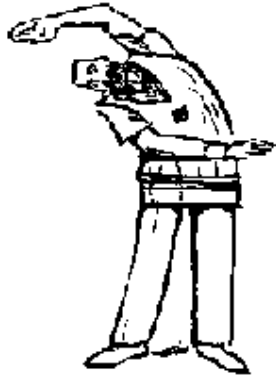
8. Groin Stretch : Sitting on the ground, place the soles of the feet together and bring them towards the body. Place the hands on the knees and push gently down stretching the groins. Hold for 8 - 10 seconds. Repeat.



9. Groin Stretch : Standing with feet apart, one foot pointing forward the other horizontal, slowly lean forward bending the front knee and stretch the groin. Hold for 8 - 10 seconds. swap legs.



10. Hip Flexor Stretch : Feet wide apart, both pointing forward, bend one knee until it is directly over the ankle. Straighten the back and slowly lower the back leg so that the knee is touching the ground. holds for 8 - 10 seconds. Swap sides.



11. Lateral Trunk Stretch : Standing, raise the left arm above the head and move it towards the right side of the body bending slowly from the waist up. Hold for 8 - 10 seconds. swap sides.



12. Shoulder & Tricep Stretch : Raise both arms above and behind the head, pushing the elbow of one arm down the back with the hand of the other. Hold for 8 - 10 seconds. Swap sides.



13. Shoulder Stretch : Extend both arms behind the back and interlock fingers. Slowly push shoulders back.



14. Back & Shoulder Stretch : Interlock fingers and stretch arms above the head with the palms of the hands facing upward. Slowly push arms back and upwards.