



Stretching



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Stretches are done to restore muscle length, they are especially important when there is a noticeable loss of range of motion or ability to stretch a muscle. It is always good to compare between sides to look for imbalances.

Stretching can help improve flexibility and range of motion about your joints. Improved flexibility may improve your performance in physical activities, decrease your risk of injuries, help your joints through their full range of motion and enable your muscles to work most effectively

Indication of stretching

- Range of movement is limited because soft tissues have lost their extensibility as the result of adhesions, contractures, and scar tissue formation, causing activity limitations (functional limitations) or participation restrictions (disabilities).
- The restricted motion may lead to structural deformities that are otherwise preventable.
- Muscle weakness and shortening of opposing tissue have led to limited range of movement.
- Maybe a component of a total fitness or sport-specific conditioning program designed to prevent or reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injuries.
- May be used prior to and after vigorous exercise to potentially reduce post-exercise muscle soreness

Contraindication to Stretching

- Bony block on end of range (EOR) on passive assessment
- Unstable/recent fracture
- Acute soft tissue injury
- Infection/haematoma in tissues
- Post-surgical repairs e.g, skin grafts, tendon repair
- Hypermobility

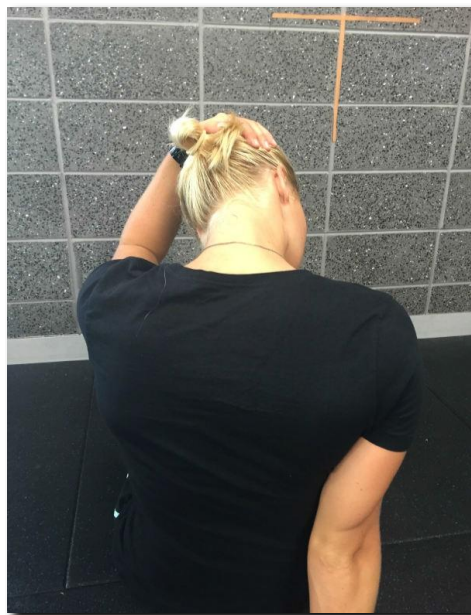
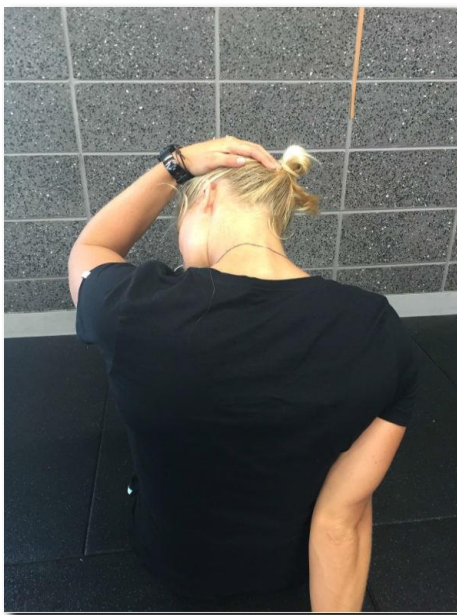
Recommended: 3 x 30s holds
10 x 3s hold for nerve stretching



Neck Stretch

To stretch the right side of your neck let your right arm relax so your hand hangs behind your hip. Rest your left hand on your head and bring your left ear down to your left shoulder, you will feel a stretch on the right side of your neck.

Try to rotate your head slight and backwards to stretch different parts of your neck, and hold the stretch where you feel the strongest pulling





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Thoracic Stretch

Lie on your back with your knees bent. Place a foam roller horizontally across your thoracic spine at any level that you feel is tight or restricted. Hold this position for 30s, then move the roller to the next area of tightness and repeat.



Thoracic: Combined thoracic and Pectoral Stretch

Lie on your back with your knees bent. Place a foam roller vertically under your spine, starting level with the top of your shoulders, and relax your arms out at 90° angles, as depicted in the image below. Hold this position for 30s.





Thoracic: Thoracic Spine Rotation (Archer Stretch)

Lie on your side with your head on a foam roller as shown in the picture. Pull the elbow of your top arm over your trunk and lower it towards the ground behind you, allow your trunk to rotate but keep your hip and knees when they are. Take a deep breath in, as you breathe out relax your muscles and try to rotate further.

You can add a neck rotation stretch by using your top arm to gently pull your chin towards your shoulder. Do this if you feel you have a stiff neck as well as upper back.





Lumbar: Lumbar Spine Rotation Stretches

Lie on your back with your knees bent up. Roll your knees side to side with your feet on the ground 5 times each side. Try to keep your back flat so you are not arching through your lower back as you rotate.

Advance the stretch by bringing one knee across your body, use your opposite arm to pull the knee across the body. Make sure your shoulders do not lift off.





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Shoulders: Internal Rotation (Sleeper Stretch)

Lie on your side, with your bottom arm out at 90° in-front of you, with your elbow bent. Use your top arm to push your hand towards the ground palm down. You should feel a stretch through the side or back of your shoulder.

If you feel a pinching sensation do not push through the stretch.





Shoulders: Posterior Shoulder Stretch

Standing with good posture, shoulder blades pulled slightly down, chin tucked in. To stretch your right lift it straight in-front of you to shoulder level, thumb up. Bend your elbow to 90° then use your left arm to pull your elbow across your body to your opposite shoulder. If you feel a pinch in the front of the shoulder do not continue the stretch. Alternatively, you can do this over a foam roller as in the picture below





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Shoulders: Latissimus Dorsi Stretch

Find the edge of a wall or pole. Grip around the edge and lean your body weight back to stretch the side of your trunk and under your armpit.

You can manipulate your back and hips to try and stretch different parts of your latissimus dorsi and lateral trunk muscles.





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Hips: Hip Flexor and ITB stretch

Kneel with one knee on the floor and the other foot on the floor in-front of you with the knee bent to 90°. Keep your trunk upright, flatten your back, and then move your hips forward until you can feel a stretch in the front of your hip.



From this position you can manipulate your hip position to direct the stretch to different areas. Move your hips towards the side of the forward leg to get a stretch more on the inside of your thigh.

And move your hips to the side of the backwards foot to get an ITB and lateral thigh stretch. You can also bring your arm up and over your head to increase the stretch as illustrated in the picture



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Hips: Posterior Hip Muscle (Figure of 4 Stretch)

Start lying on your stomach with your hands under your shoulders. To stretch your right leg push yourself up and bring your right knee underneath you so it is next to your right hand, in-line with your right hip. Next bring your foot forward so it is level with your knee, you knee should be close to a 90° angle. IF the right side of your bottom can reach the floor then lean forward to increase the stretch. You should feel the stretch in the back of your hip.

Alternatively, you can do the stretch lying on your back as in the third picture.





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Gluteus: Muscle Stretch

Lie on your back and bring one knee up and across your body. Keep your shoulders on the ground so your spine does not rotate.





Legs: Hamstring stretch

There are many different positions to stretch your hamstring. Choose which is the most comfortable for you. Remember to keep your knee slightly bent, you should feel a muscle stretch sensation in the back of your thigh, and not a nerve stretches below your knee or in you hip/back.



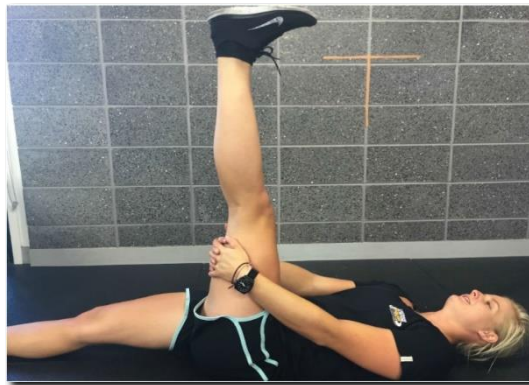


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Nerve Stretching - Lower Limb

Start lying on your back and bring one leg up so your knee is above your hip and hold both hands behind your knee. Start with your knee bent, pull your toes back then straighten your knee until you feel a pulling sensation down your leg. Do not hold for more than 3s, and repeat 10 times. Stop if you feel any pins and needles



For a more aggressive stretch you can start sitting with your legs against the wall, knees slightly bent. Hold your chin to your chest with your hands and slump forward. Slowly straighten one knee, keeping your chin to your chest. Then repeat on the other side.



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Nerve Stretching - Upper Limb

Place your palm on the wall with your fingers positioned behind you. Straighten your elbow and turn your body away until you feel a pulling down your arm. Do not hold this stretch for more than 3 s, and stop if you feel any pins and needles in your hand.

10 x 3 s holds is a good starting dose.





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Nerve Stretching - Forearm

Start standing or sitting. To stretch your right arm, bring your hand up in-front of you with your elbow completely straight. Use your left hand to bend the wrist down and stretch the extensors. You can also try this stretch with your fingers in a fist to stretch different forearm muscles.



To stretch your flexors, turn your palm up, still keeping your elbow straight. Use your left arm to bend your fingers and wrist backwards. You will feel a stretch in the front of your forearm. Alternatively, you can do this stretch with your hands on the ground as in the picture below

