

Stretching & Warming-Up

Prior to any stretching, one should warm-up their muscles. A warm-up consists of any cardiovascular activity that gets the heart pumping and blood flowing. One should warm-up for 10 to 20 minutes prior to activity or stretching.

How an individual's body responds to stretching is important. Two of the intricate parts that make-up the human body are the skeletal and the muscular systems. The bones help make up the specialized support system of your body's skeleton, and to perform their support function, they must be held together. Joints are points at which two or more bones connect, and the connections are performed primary by ligaments and assisted by muscles and tendons.

Benefits of Flexibility

- Flexibility is developed when connective tissues and muscles are elongated through regular, proper stretching.
- Flexibility diminishes over time when these tissues are not stretched or exercised.

Benefits of Stretching

- Stretching can optimize an individual's learning, practice, and performance of many types of skilled movements. For example, a high jumper using the straddle technique requires additional flexibility in the adductors, groin, and hamstrings.
- Stretching can increase an individual's mental and physical relaxation.
- Stretching can promote development of body awareness.
- Stretching can reduce risk of joint sprain or muscle strain.
- Stretching can reduce risk of back problems.
- Stretching can reduce muscle soreness.
- Stretching can reduce the severity of painful menstruation for females.
- Stretching can reduce muscle tension.
- Stretching is only beneficial when done properly.
- Stretching needs to be done gradually, slowly, and using the correct techniques to avoid injury.