



# Stretching

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## Dynamic Stretching Exercises

The following are examples of dynamic stretching and mobility exercises, which could form part of the [warm up](#) program in a training session. The dynamic exercises you incorporate into your warm up program should be appropriate to the movements you would experience in your sport/event. In all the exercises breathe easily whilst performing them.

Current research work [Medicine & Science in Sport and Exercise and Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research, suggests that the use of dynamic stretches – slow controlled movements through the full range of motion – are the most appropriate exercises for the [warm up](#). By contrast, [static stretches](#) are more appropriate for the [cool down](#).

### Joint Rotations

From a standing position with your arms hanging loosely at you sides, flex, extend, and rotate each of the following joints:

- Fingers
- Wrist
- Elbows
- Shoulders
- Neck
- Trunk and shoulder blades
- Hips
- Knees
- Ankles
- Feet and toes

### Neck Mobility

- Flexion/Extension – Tuck your chin into your chest, and then lift your chin upward as far as possible. 6 to 10 repetitions
- Lateral Flexion – lower your left ear toward your left shoulder and then your right ear to your right shoulder. 6 to 10 repetitions
- Rotation – Turn your chin laterally toward your left shoulder and then rotate it toward your right shoulder
- 6 to 10 repetitions



## **Shoulder Circles**

- Stand tall, feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent
- Raise your right shoulder towards your right ear, take it backwards, down and then up again to the ear in a smooth action
- 6 to 10 repetitions
- Repeat with the other shoulder

## **Arm Swings**

- Stand tall, feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent
- Keep the back straight at all times
- Overhead/Down and back – Swing both arms continuously to an overhead position and then forward, down, and backwards. 6 to 10 repetitions
- Side/Front Crossover – Swing both arms out to your sides and then cross them in front of your chest
- 6 to 10 repetitions

## **Side Bends**

- Stand tall with good posture, feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent, hands resting on hips
- Lift your trunk up and away from your hips and bend smoothly first to one side, then the other, avoiding the tendency to lean either forwards or backwards
- Repeat the whole sequence 6 to 10 times with a slow rhythm, breathing out as you bend to the side, and in as you return to the centre.

## **Hip circles and twists**

- Circles – With your hands on your hips and feet spread wider than your shoulders, make circles with your hips in a clockwise direction for 6 to 10 repetitions. Then repeat in a counter clockwise direction
- Twists – Extend your arms out to your sides, and twist your torso and hips to the left, shifting your weight on to the left foot. Then twist your torso to the right while shifting your weight to the right foot
- 6 to 10 reps on each side

## **Half Squat**

- Stand tall with good posture holding your hands out in front of you for balance



- Now bend at the knees until your thighs are parallel with the floor
- Keep your back long throughout the movement, and look straight ahead
- Make sure that your knees always point in the same direction as your toes
- Once at your lowest point, fully straighten your legs to return to your starting position
- Repeat the exercise sixteen times with a smooth, controlled rhythm
- Breathe in as you descend, and out as you rise
- 6 to 10 repetitions

## **Leg Swings**

- Flexion/Extension- Stand sideways onto the wall
- Weight on your left leg and your right hand on the wall for balance
- Swing your right leg forward and backward
- 6 to 10 repetitions on each leg
- Cross-Body flexion/Abduction – Leaning slightly forward with both hands on a wall and your weight on your left leg, swing your right leg to the left in front of your body, pointing your toes upwards as your foot reaches its furthest point of motion
- Then swing the right leg back to the right as far as comfortable, again pointing your toes up as your foot reaches its final point of movement
- 6 to 10 repetitions on each leg

## **Lunges**

- Standing tall both feet together (starting position)
- Keeping the back straight lunge forward with the right leg approx 1 to 1½ metre
- The right thigh should be parallel with the ground and the right lower leg vertical
- Spring back to the starting position
- Repeat with the left leg
- 6 to 10 repetitions on each leg

## **Ankle Bounce**

- Double leg bounce – Leaning forward with your hands on the wall and your weight on your toes, raise and lower both heels rapidly (bounce)
- Each time, lift your heels one to two inches from the ground while maintaining ground contact with the ball of your feet
- 6 to 10 repetitions



- Single leg bounce – leaning forward with your hands on a wall and all your weight on your left foot, raise the right knee forward while pushing the left heel towards the ground
- Then lower the right foot to the floor while raising the left heel one or two inches
- Repeat in a rapid, bouncy fashion
- 6 to 10 repetitions on each leg

## Static Stretching Exercises

Research work detailed in Medicine & Science in Sport and Exercise and Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research, suggests that the use of [dynamic stretches](#) – slow controlled movements through the full range of motion – are the most appropriate exercises for [warming up](#). By contrast, static stretches are more appropriate for the [cool down](#).

The following are examples of general static stretching exercises that could form part of the [cool down](#) program at the end of a training session when stretches are held for 10 seconds or to improve the [mobility](#) and range of movement when stretches are held for 30 seconds. In all exercises breathe easily whilst performing them.

### Chest Stretch

- Stand tall, feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent
- Hold you arms out to the side parallel with the ground and the palms of the hand facing forward
- Stretch the arms back as far as possible
- You should feel the stretch across your chest

### Biceps Stretch

- Stand tall, feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent
- Hold you arms out to the side parallel with the ground and the palms of the hand facing forward
- Rotate the hands so the palms face to the rear
- Stretch the arms back as far as possible
- You should feel the stretch across your chest and in the biceps

### Upper Back Stretch

- Stand tall, feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent
- Interlock your fingers and push your hands as far away from your chest as possible, allowing your upper back to relax
- You should feel the stretch between your shoulder blades



## **Shoulder Stretch**

- Stand tall, feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent
- Place your right arm, parallel with the ground across the front of your chest
- Bend the left arm up and use the left forearm to ease the right arm closer to your chest
- You will feel the stretch in the shoulder
- Repeat with the other arm

## **Shoulder and Triceps Stretch**

- Stand tall, feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent
- Place both hands above your head and then slide both of your hands down the middle of your spine
- You will feel the stretch in the shoulders and the triceps

## **Side Bends**

- Stand tall, feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent, hands resting on the hips
- Bend slowly to one side, come back to the vertical position and then bend to the other side
- Do not lean forwards or backwards

## **Abdominal and lower back muscles**

- Lie face down on the ground in a prone position
- Lift your body off the ground so that you are supported only by your forearms and toes. The elbows should be on the ground and should be almost directly below your shoulders. Your forearms and hands should be resting on the ground, pointed straight ahead, toes and feet should be shoulder width apart and your head in line with your spine
- Contract your gluteus (bum) muscles gently. Hold for ten seconds
- Lift your right arm off the ground, straighten it and point it straight ahead, holding it in the air for 10 seconds
- Return to the starting position
- Repeat with the left arm
- Return to starting position
- Lift your right leg off the ground and hold it there for ten seconds (keep back straight).
- Return to starting position
- Repeat with left leg



- Return to starting position
- lift your right arm and left leg simultaneously and hold them in position for ten seconds
- Return to starting position
- Lift your left arm and right leg simultaneously and hold them in position for ten seconds
- Return to the starting position

### **Hamstring Stretch**

- Sit on the ground with both legs straight out in front of you
- Bend the left leg and place the sole of the left foot alongside the knee of the right leg
- Allow the left leg to lie relaxed on the ground
- Bend forward keeping the back straight
- You will feel the stretch in the hamstring of the right leg
- Repeat with the other leg

### **Calf Stretch**

- Stand tall with one leg in front of the other, hands flat and at shoulder height against a wall.
- Ease your back leg further away from the wall, keeping it straight and press the heel firmly into the floor
- Keep your hips facing the wall and the rear leg and spine in a straight line
- You will feel the stretch in the calf of the rear leg
- Repeat with the other leg

### **Hip and Thigh Stretch**

- Stand tall with you feet approximately two shoulder widths apart
- Turn the feet and face to the right
- Bend the right leg so that the right thigh is parallel with the ground and the right lower leg is vertical
- Gradually lower the body
- Keep your back straight and use the arms to balance
- You will feel the stretch along the front of the left thigh and along the hamstrings of the right leg
- Repeat by turning and facing to the left

### **Adductor Stretch**



- Stand tall with you feet approximately two shoulder widths apart
- Bend the right leg and lower the body
- Keep you back straight and use the arms to balance
- You will feel the stretch in the left leg adductor
- Repeat with the left leg

### **Groin Stretch**

- Sit with tall posture
- Ease both of your feet up towards your body and place the soles of your feet together, allowing your knees to come up and out to the side
- Resting your hands on your lower legs or ankles and ease both knees towards the ground
- You will feel the stretch along the inside of your thighs and groin

### **Front of Trunk Stretch**

- Lie face down on the floor, fully outstretched
- Bring your hands to the sides of your shoulders and ease your chest off the floor, keeping your hips firmly pressed into the ground
- You will feel the stretch in the front of the trunk

### **Iliotibial Band Stretch**

- Sitting tall with legs stretched out in front of you
- Bend the right knee and place the right foot on the ground to the left side of the left knee
- Turn your shoulders so that you are facing to the right
- Using your left arm against your right knee to help ease you further round
- Use your right arm on the floor for support
- You will feel the stretch along the length of the spine and in the muscles around the right hip

### **Quadriceps Stretch**

- Lie face down on the floor, resting your fore-head on your right hand
- Press your hips firmly into the floor and bring your left foot up towards your buttocks
- Take hold of the left foot with the left hand and ease the foot closer to you buttocks
- Repeat with the right leg
- You will feel the stretch along the front of the thigh