

Stretching Exercises

Stretching exercises consist of a series of movements that, if done before exercise, helps warm up the body, increases muscle temperature and enhances joint mobility. They can also be used to relax muscles, ease post-exercise muscle soreness and enhance muscle and joint protection after exercise.

There are two types of stretching exercises, i.e. dynamic and static. The former comprises movements through a wide range of motion, while the latter involves holding stretches without movement.

Warm-up Exercise: Dynamic Stretching

Walk 6 to 10 meters, and perform the following exercises to stretch the muscles:



Sequence 1



Sequence 2



Sequence 3

Cool-down Exercise: Static Stretching

Stand still and do the following moves for different body parts:

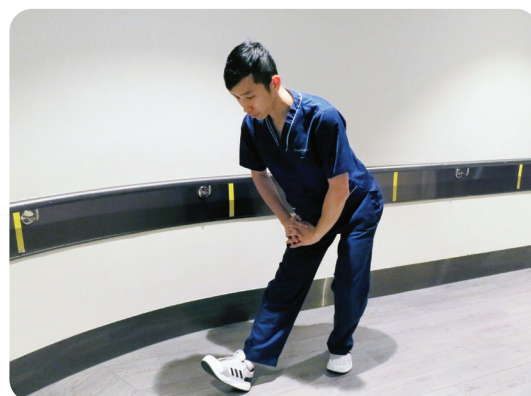


1. Neck Muscle: Slowly move the neck accordingly until you feel a mild stretching pain. Hold it for 15 to 20 seconds. Do on both sides as indicated. Do 3 sets.



2. Deltoid: Stretch both sides. Hold it for 15 to 20 seconds. Do 3 sets on each side.

3. Waist: Put your hands on your hips. Twist your body to the left until you feel a stretching pain. Hold it for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat on the other side. Do 3 sets. It helps relieve muscle stiffness after exercise.



4. Both Sides of the Waist and Latissimus Dorsi: Stretch both sides. Do 3 sets on each side. Hold it for 15 to 20 seconds.

5. Hamstring: Hold it for 15 to 20 seconds. Keep your back straight all the time. Stretch both sides. Do 3 sets on each side.



6. Hip Adductors: Hold it for 15 to 20 seconds. Stretch both sides. Do 3 sets on each side.



7. Calves and Muscles around the Hip Joints: Hold it for 15 to 20 seconds. Stretch both sides. Do 3 sets on each side. It helps stretch the calf muscles and hip flexors, increase joint mobility and reduce tension in the Achilles tendon.



8. Thighs and Quadriceps: Hold it for 15 to 20 seconds. Stretch both sides. Do 3 sets on each side. It reduces tightness in the quadriceps muscle and tendon.

Warm-up Exercise for Yoga

Without high flexibility, yoga practitioners are prone to waist and tendon injuries. Sufficient warm-up exercises can protect your back and thigh muscles, hips and shoulder joints, especially before yoga practice which requires a lot of twists and turns.



1. Sit on the floor and cross your legs. Hold your right knee to your chest for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat with your left knee. Do 3 sets.



2. Raise your right arm and move it behind your back. Try to grab your fingers with your left arm behind. Use a towel if necessary. Hold it for 15 to 20 seconds. Repeat with your left arm. Do 3 sets.

Many studies show that one is more likely to get injured without warm-ups. If you are not used to regular exercise, remember to do the abovementioned stretches before and after exercise. Try to make exercise a habit before pushing beyond your limits.

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