

Stretching Guidelines



Different types of stretching

Stretching is a type of flexibility exercise. There are 2 major and common types of stretching: dynamic and static. Both are different in nature and should be performed at different times.

- **Dynamic stretching**

Also known as mobility drills should be performed before you begin exercising. Dynamic stretching involves a gradual transition from one body position to another and involves a progressive increase in reach and range of motion as the movement is repeated several times. Stretching by moving through your range of motion raises your heart rate and increases blood flow to your muscles which allows them to properly warm up and decreases your muscle stiffness. This helps prep your muscle so they are ready to perform for your workout. Some examples of dynamic stretching include leg swings, torso twists and arm circles.

- **Static stretching**

Should be performed after exercising or can be perform alone on its own. Static stretching involves slowly moving a muscle to the end of its range of motion and then holding the position for a period of time. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends holding each stretch for 10 to 30 seconds. For older individuals, holding a stretch for 30 to 60 seconds is recommended for the greatest benefits. You should stretch the muscle enough to feel a light to moderate discomfort, but don't go

too far where you start to feel pain. Listen to your body. Some examples of static stretching include calf stretch, sitting hamstring stretch and shoulder stretch.

Stretching/flexibility recommendations

- Incorporate stretching exercises into your workouts 2 to 3 days a week, but daily stretching is most effective.
- Your flexibility exercises should target each of the major muscle-tendon groups:
 - Shoulder
 - Chest
 - Trunk/back
 - Hips
 - Quads/Hamstrings
- Perform dynamic stretching before working out
- Perform static stretching or dynamic stretching after working out
- Stretch to a point of feeling tightness or light to moderate discomfort, depending on your fitness level
- Do not bounce while stretching, this can cause injuries. It is best to hold the stretch in one position or to slowly move it through its range of motion
- Add in foam rolling at the end of your workout to help improve flexibility

Benefits of stretching

Stretching provides many benefits for your body. Stretching helps prepare your body for your workout and aids in your body's recovery process after your workout. It also helps improve your joint range of motion, your overall flexibility and can even be used to help reduce your stress.

For more information on stretching, consult a YMCA Certified Personal Trainer!



Reference:

ACSM's Guidelines for Exercising Testing and Prescription, Ninth Edition