

## **FLEXIBILITY AND STRETCHING BASICS**

Flexibility is the normal range of motion around a joint or group of joints. Stretching exercises are an ideal form of flexibility exercise. The **purposes of stretching are to prepare muscles for activity**, help relax physically and mentally and to assist in preventing injuries and muscle soreness.

**Static or slow, sustained stretching is safe and more effective.**

**Ballistic or bouncing and bobbing type of stretching should be avoided at all times!** Ballistic stretching will encourage small tears within the muscle and can cause a temporary muscle shortening.

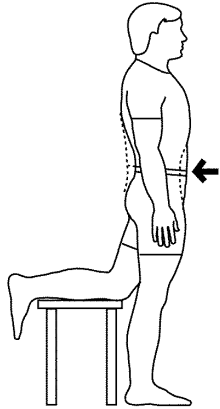
### ***Principles of stretching***

- Get into the stretch position slowly with no sudden jerks or bounces
- Do not go past a comfortable stretch
- **Do not stretch to pain**
- **Hold** the stretched position for **30 seconds** although it can be longer - a slow, holding stretch will permit optimal results
- Repeat each stretch **2-4 times**, alternating on each side, and going further into the stretch with each repetition
- Do not be concerned if your muscles feel tight initially - as you practice your stretching program, you will notice a comfortable and gradual improvement
- If you have any further questions, ask us at Metro Health Sports Medicine.

**As with any exercise program, always consult your physician before beginning the program!**

# LEG STRETCHES

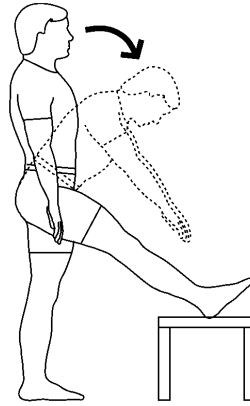
## 1. HIP FLEXOR STRETCH



Place lower leg on chair. Keep stomach tight and bring hips forward until stretch is felt in front hip. Hold 30 seconds.

Repeat 3 times.  
Stretch after warm up and after cool down.

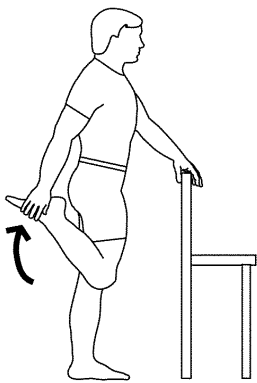
## 2. HAMSTRING STRETCH



Place foot on stool (hold on to the back of a chair if needed). Slowly lean forward keeping back straight, until stretch is felt in back of thigh. Hold 30 seconds

Repeat 3 times.  
Stretch after warm up and after cool down.

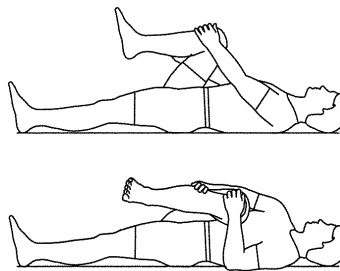
## 3. QUADRICEPS STRETCH



Pull heel toward buttock until a stretch is felt in front of thigh. Move bent knee behind hip to maximize stretch. DO NOT JACK-KNIFE FORWARD. Hold 30 seconds.

Repeat 3 times.  
Stretch after warm up and after cool down.

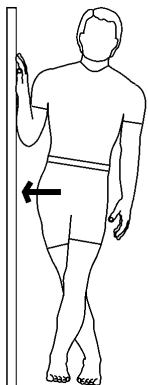
## 4. PIRIFORMIS STRETCH



Lay on your back. Pull involved knee towards opposite shoulder. Hold 30 seconds.

Repeat 3 times.  
Stretch after warm up and after cool down.

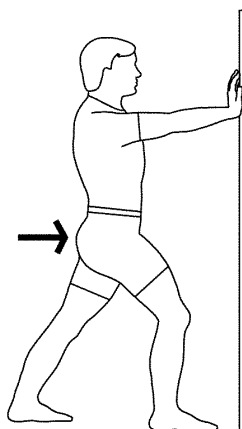
## 5. IT BAND STRETCH



Cross Right / Left leg over the other, then lean to the Right / Left until a stretch is felt over the outside of hip. Hold 30 seconds.

Repeat 3 times.  
Stretch after warm up and after cool down.

## 6. CALF STRETCH



Stand with involved foot back, and leg straight. Keeping heel on floor and turned slightly outward, gently lean into wall until stretch is felt in calf. Hold 30 seconds. Then bend both knees until a stretch is felt lower in calf. Hold 30 seconds.

Repeat 3 times each on each side.