

Inner Fit Stretching Handout for Members

Since flexibility is one of the five components of fitness, it is important to know that stretching should be an integral part of every workout program. Here are Ten Reasons to help remember why stretching is important

1. **Decreases muscle stiffness and increases range of motion.** Stretching helps improve your range of motion which may also slow the degeneration of the joints.
2. **May reduce your risk of injury.** A flexible muscle is less likely to become injured from a slightly extensive movement. By increasing the range of motion in a particular joint through stretching, you may decrease the resistance on your muscles during various activities.
3. **Helps relieve post-exercise aches and pains.** After a hard workout, stretching the muscles will keep them loose and lessen a shortening and tightening effect that can lead to post-workout aches and pains.
4. **Improves posture.** Stretching the muscles of the lower back, shoulders and chest will help keep your back in better alignment and improve your posture.
5. **Helps reduce or manage stress.** Well stretched muscles hold less tension and therefore, leave you feeling less stressed.
6. **Reduces muscular tension and enhances muscular relaxation.** Stretching allows the muscles to relax. Habitually tense muscles tend to cut off their own circulation resulting in a lack of oxygen and essential nutrients.
7. **Improves mechanical efficiency and overall functional performance.** Since a flexible joint requires less energy to move through a wider range of motion, a flexible body improves overall performance by creating more energy-efficient movements.
8. **Prepares the body for the stress of exercise.** Stretching prior to exercise allows the muscles to loosen up and become resistant to the impact they are about to undergo.
9. **Promotes circulation.** Stretching increases blood supply to the muscles and joints which allow for greater nutrient transportation and improves the circulation of blood through the entire body.
10. **Decreases the risk of low-back pain.** Flexibility in the hamstrings, hip flexors and muscles attached to the pelvis relieves stress on the lumbar spine which in turn reduces the risk of low-back pain.

When stretching, hold for 30-60 seconds, and repeat 2-3 times, several times a week. Stretching is about feeling good, not about tearing or injuring yourself. Work within your range of motion and continue to push past little boundaries for success. Below are our favourite stretches that we feel are important for members to perform on a regular basis.

Stretching Class at Inner Fit:

Tuesdays 73pm Spinning & Stretch, Sundays 1045am Mobility & Stretch

Chest Stretch

Place your forearm on a solid & sturdy surface with your shoulder joint and elbow joint at 90 degrees. Slowly turn your body away from your arm until you feel a good stretch in your chest.



Shoulder Stretch

Extend your left arm across your chest and gently press your right hand on the left elbow. Hold and repeat on the opposite arm.



Quad Stretch

Stand on the left leg while holding the right bent leg behind you. For beginners, use a stool, person or wall for balance. Switch.



Floor Knee to Chest Stretch

Lie on your back with legs bent or straight. With both hands, pull up one knee and press it to your chest. Hold then release and repeat with the opposite leg.



Buddy Hamstring Stretches

Partner One, begin on your back. Partner Two, stand or kneel in front of Partner One. Partner One, draw your leg up as straight as you can comfortably go. Partner Two, take Partner One's leg in hand and apply additional pressure. Remember, we're going for mild tension! Listen to your Partner as you stretch, holding the stretch 3-5 counts before returning the leg and alternating sides.



90 Lat Stretch

Stand with your feet hip-width apart facing a table or wall. Fold forward to 90 degrees and gently touch the table or wall for balance. Pull your shoulders down and back. Hold your chest up and out. Shift your weight over your heels, leaning back into your hips.



Hip Flexor Stretch Right

In a forward left lunge, lower down onto your right knee keeping your hips tucked underneath you and glutes squeezed. With your right hand overhead, move your hips slightly forward. For a more intense stretch lean to the left. Switch sides.



Leg Crossover Stretches

Lie on the floor with knees bent, feet flat and arms stretched out beside you. Place one ankle on top of the opposite knee and let the legs fall to the side as you keep your shoulders grounded. Hold for a few seconds, come back to neutral and switch to the opposite side



Side Stretch

Stand tall with your feet together and reach both arms overhead with palms together. Inhale and bend laterally to the right side. Repeat on other side.



Gluteal "Butt" Rolls

Start seated on the foam roller with both hands on the floor behind the roller and both feet on the floor in front of the roller with knees bent. Lean your body to the left placing most of your bodyweight on your left glute as you search for any tightness.



Advanced Left Gluteal Rolls

Start seated on the foam roller with both hands on the floor behind the roller and both feet on the floor in front of the roller with knees bent. Place your left ankle on your right knee and lean toward the left side to find any tightness on the left gluteal.



Triceps Stretch

Raise your left arm up and bend it back down the middle of your back. Bring right hand to left elbow and gently apply pressure.

