

Podiatry Services

Stretching Guide

Why stretch?

Stretching helps to keep muscles supple, increase the range of joint motion, enhances flexibility, improves coordination and prevents injuries. Omitting stretching as part of your daily routine or exercise regime may lead to stiff and sore muscles; this may affect your mobility or keep you from working out tomorrow!

When should I stretch?

Whilst exercising or during daily activity, your muscles will tighten and shorten from contractions so it is important that you stretch for a minimum of 15 minutes a day as this will also improve your mobility. Within an exercise regime, it is a good idea to stretch after warm-up, during and after your activity. Remember if you carry out sporting activities you need to stretch appropriately.

How long should it take?

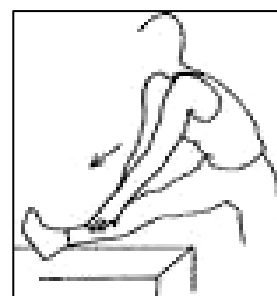
Perform each stretching exercise 5 times. Slowly stretch into the desired position, to the point of mild tension in your muscles, going as far as possible without pain and hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Relax the stretch and then repeat.

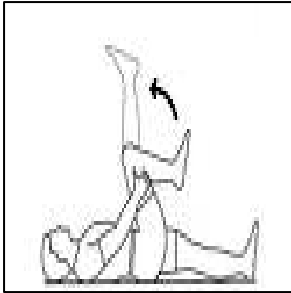
Remember: Never stretch to the point of pain but it is normal to feel the muscle pull. The right way to stretch your muscles is slowly and in a relaxed fashion. **Do not 'bounce'** during the stretch or you may overstretch or pull the muscle, which may cause damage.

This stretching guide contains basic instructions and images demonstrating each stretch.

Hamstrings (muscles in the back of your thigh)

The first hamstring stretch is a standing stretch. Place your heel of the foot on a ledge/step as shown opposite. Make sure your back and the leg on the ledge/step are straight. Lean your head and chest towards the foot on the ledge/step until you feel a comfortable stretch. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat stretch with the other leg. Please do this stretching exercise



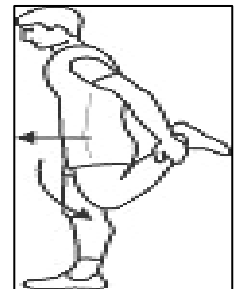


For the second hamstring stretch, lie on your back, keeping your back flat and your eyes focused upward, as shown opposite. Grasp the back of one thigh with both your hands and (leg bent) pull that thigh into a 90-degree position from the floor. Then slowly straighten your knee. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat stretch with other leg. Please do this stretching exercise ☐

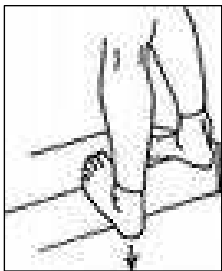
Quadriceps (*muscles in the front of your thigh*)

The quadriceps stretch is the Quad Bend. Put one hand on a stationary object for balance use the opposite hand to grasp the leg around the ankle, lifting it toward your buttocks as shown, make sure that your knee points straight down not out to the side. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat stretch with other leg.

Please do this stretching exercise ☐



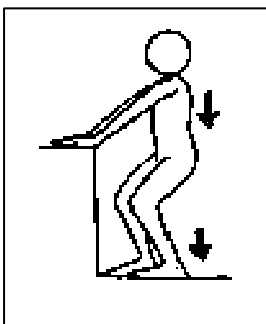
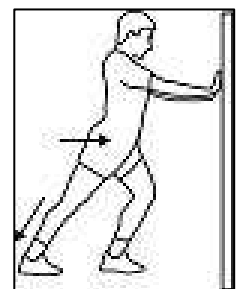
Calf Muscles (*muscles in the back of your leg*)



For the first calf muscle stretch, stand on a step and use your hand to balance yourself on a stationary object such as the stair railing. While standing on the balls of your feet, lower your heels down from the step. For variations that do not require the use of a step, please ask your Podiatrist.

Please do this stretching exercise ☐

For the second calf muscle stretch; lean forward against a wall with both palms against the wall as shown opposite. The leg you want to stretch is back, several feet from the wall, with your heel firmly positioned on the floor. Your other leg is flexed about halfway between your back leg and the wall. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat stretch with other leg. Make sure your feet are parallel and pointing forwards. Please do this stretching exercise ☐



For the third calf muscle stretch you will need to stand facing a wall with one foot directly in front of the other, and just touching as shown opposite. The feet should form a straight line. Supporting the knee of the back leg on the calf of the front leg, bend slowly at the knees, keeping body upright, until the muscle in the back of the leg begins to 'pull'. Hold this position for 20 seconds, then relax. Repeat 10 times.

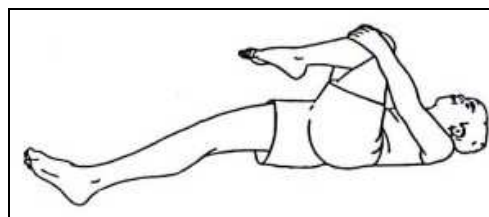
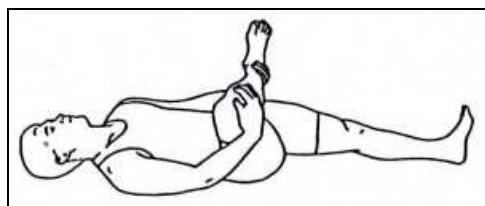
Please do this stretching exercise ☐

Stretches lower back, side of hip/illiotibial Band:

Sit on floor with left leg straight out in front; Bend right leg, cross right foot over place outside left knee bend left elbow and rest it outside right knee. Place right hand behind hips on floor. Turn head over right shoulder, rotate upper body right. Hold 10 to 15 seconds. Repeat on other side. Breathe in slowly ☐

**External Hip Rotators:**

Clasp hands around knee and gently press it toward opposite shoulder. Hold for 30 seconds. Feel stretch in buttocks and outside of the hip. Repeat with other leg. Repeat 3 times, 1 session per day. ☐

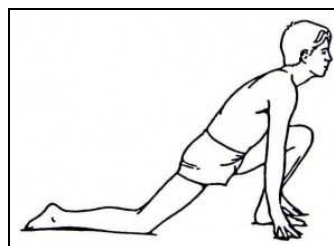
**Internal Hip Rotators:**

Gently pull foot and knee toward shoulder, rotating at hip. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat with other leg.

Repeat 3 times, do 1 session per day ☐

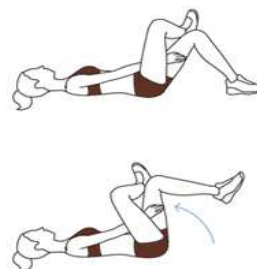
Hip Flexor:

Slowly move hips forward while keeping trunk upright until a stretch is felt in the front of the thigh. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times, do 1 session per day. ☐



Gluteal Stretches:

Lie on your back with knees bent. Place your right ankle on your left knee and grasp the back of your left thigh with both hands (top). Pull your leg gently toward your torso (bottom). Hold for 30 seconds. Switch sides ☐

**Gluteal Strengthening:**

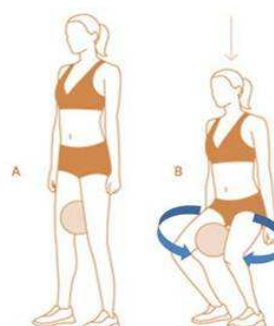
Lie on back with knees bent. Tilt pelvis back, and gently lift pelvis off ground approx 4 fingers distance from floor. Ensure pelvis is level and hold in this up position. Hold for no more than 30 seconds, and don't drop one side of pelvis. Start if short hold time and build up ☐



A single leg lift bridge is more difficult version of this. ☐

VMO Strengthening:

Stand with a rolled up towel, ball or balloon between knees, and gently squat whilst squeezing your knees together. ☐



Please do all the exercises that your Podiatrist has demonstrated and ticked above. If you have any problems, stop and contact the Podiatry Department.