

Stretching for Runners

Physical Therapy for Running in Corpus Christi

Stretching is an essential part of running. A good stretching routine can help to minimize muscle imbalances, prevent injury, improve your exercise endurance and your running performance. The following stretching program is designed for runners who do not have any current injuries or individual stretching needs. If you have an injury, or a specific mechanical imbalance that may be holding back your running performance, your Humpal Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine Centers Physical Therapist can design a stretching program just for you.

When is the Best Time to Stretch?

When you are warm and relaxed! For optimum performance you should stretch after you have done a general body warm up of about 5-10 minutes. This can include a combination of light running over a distance or on the spot as well as exercises such as tuck jumps or jumping jacks. Running is a dynamic sport so you will need to do both dynamic and static stretching. Dynamic muscle stretches (short quick movements) form part of your pre-race or training warm-up. They are used to prepare your muscles for the rapid contractions experienced during running. Static stretches (long slow holds), on the other hand, are more useful to improve your overall flexibility and are most effective if done after your race or training run, at the end of your cool down.

Rules for Dynamic Stretching:

- Warm up your body first, then stretch while your muscles are still warm.
- Move through your range of movement, keeping control of the movement with your muscles. Do not allow momentum to control the movement by "flinging" or "throwing" your body parts around.
- You may feel light resistance in your muscles, but you should never feel pain during a stretch.
- Start with slow, low intensity movements, and gradually progress to full-speed movements through range of motion. Complete these motions for several repetitions (10-15 times.)
- Finish with simulated quick running motions such as running on the spot, arm swings and jumps. Repeat for several repetitions (8-10 times.)

Rules for Static Stretching:

- Stretch while your muscles are still warm from running.
- Slowly take your muscles to the end of their range. You will feel slight resistance in the muscle, but you should never feel pain during a stretch.
- Hold the stretch in a static position. Do not bounce.
- Hold each stretch for 20-30 seconds. Repeat each stretch 3-4 times.

Essential Stretches for Running:

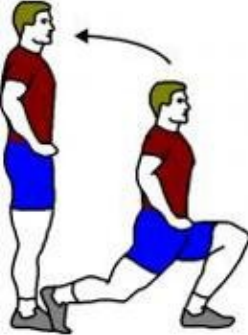
These muscles are your prime movers for running. You'll need to stretch these muscles each time you train or before a race. Don't forget to stretch both sides. The stretching program shown below will take about 15-20 minutes to complete.

Dynamic Stretches

Arm Swings



Front Lunges



Leg Swings side to side and front to back





Trunk rotation (quickly)



Ankle range of movement



Leg curls



Jogging on the spot (knees high)



Static Stretches

Hamstring Stretch



Quadricep Stretch



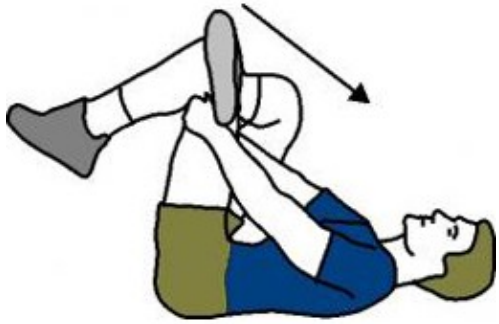
Calf Stretch Gastrocnemius



Calf Stretch Soleus



Gluteal Stretch



Adductor Stretch



ITB (Iliotibial Band) Stretch



Hip Flexor Stretch



Trunk Rotation



Pectoral Stretch

