



TIPS FOR SMART STRETCHING

BROUGHT TO YOU BY CAPITAL PHYSICAL THERAPY



WHEN TO STRETCH

Pre-exercise "dynamic warm-ups", such as torso twists, arm circles, and light jogging, prepare the body for work. However, recent exercise physiology studies show that static stretching is best done after exercise.

DON'T RUSH

Stretching is as important as exercising. If you rush, you might injure a muscle, tendon or other connective tissue. Be sure to include 10 to 15 minutes of stretching as part of your exercise time.

PAY ATTENTION

See (in your mind) what you're doing. Hold a mental visual image of the muscle group, where it comes from, where it goes. Visualization helps establish a brain-muscle connection, making your muscles much smarter!

SAMPLE LOWER-EXTREMITY STRETCHES

Perform on both legs; 3 times, 20 seconds each.

HAMSTRINGS

Sit on the edge of your bed or a bench. Have the involved leg on this surface. Slowly bend forward at your hips, being careful to keep your back straight. (**TIP:** Reach both arms toward a point high in the wall in front of you to enhance the stretch. Feel the stretch in the back of your thigh.)

QUADRICEPS

Stand with your back facing a high chair or bench (thigh-high). Place the foot/ankle of the involved leg on this surface, thus bending your knee with your leg behind you. Feel the stretch in your thigh. (**TIP:** You can lean your trunk slightly backwards to enhance the stretch.)

CALVES

Stand at a wall, with the involved leg behind you and your knee straight. Place hands on the wall and lean forward with the foot of the involved leg flat on the floor and perpendicular to the wall. Stretch is felt in the calf. (**TIP:** Perform the same stretch with the involved knee slightly bent.)