

# STRETCH

Stretching is an important part of looking after your body when you are exercising. While our coaches will be taking you through stretches as a part of some group sessions you want to make sure you stretch when you are training by yourself.

Here is a stretch routine to do when you get in from a training session.

## How to Stretch

- After a session, commence a stretching programme as soon as the heart rate has lowered slightly after the session.
- Acknowledge and isolate the muscle group being stretched.
- Move slowly and smoothly into the stretching positions.
- Strive for good alignment of the body to obtain correct positions.
- Breathe normally and freely. Accentuate the exhalation when moving deeper into the stretch.
- Hold the stretch, usually 20 seconds to 1 minute and then relax.
- Do not strain or force a joint to a point of pain.
- Concentrate, breathe and relax to feel the stretch.
- Come out of each stretch slowly and carefully.
- If pain is experienced, come out of the stretch, consult a sports coach or personal trainer to ensure technique and form is 100%.

Here are the stretches to do and how to do them effectively:

### Peroneals

**Set Position** Stand upright, hands on hips. If necessary, use wall for balance and support. Turn one foot under so the outside portion rests on the floor.

**Breathing** Exhale, slowly invert the ankle, press to the outside of the foot Hold the stretch and relax. Repeat with the other foot.

**Hold** For 20 seconds + on each side

**Feel** The stretch in the outer edge of the ankle and lower leg.



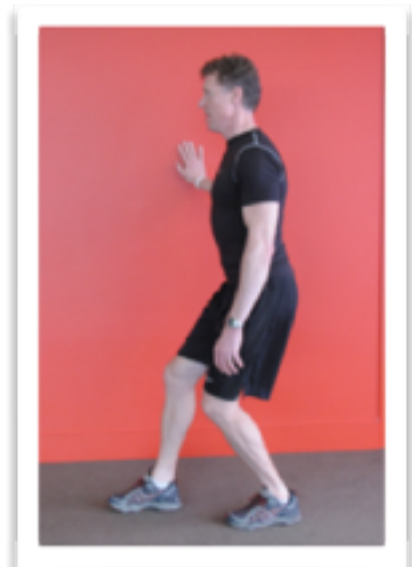
## Gastrocnemus

- Set Position** Stand upright, hands on a wall for resistance. Step one leg back keep the leg straight. Bend front knee, lean into the wall maintain a line from head, neck, spine, hips back leg and ankle. Keep rear foot flat, heel down and parallel to the hips.
- Breathing** Exhale, move the chest towards the wall, shift body weight forward. Hold the stretch and relax. Repeat with the other leg.
- Hold** For 20 seconds + on each side.
- Feel** The stretch in the back of the lower leg.
- Imagery** Create a diagonal line from head to foot



## Soleus

- Set Position** Stand upright. If necessary use wall for balance and support. Step one leg back, both knees bent. Keep the body upright, shoulders over hips. Keep feet flat and parallel to the hips.
- Breathing** Exhale, bend knees, shift body weight into the back heel. Hold the stretch and relax. Repeat with the other leg.
- Hold** For 20 seconds + on each side.
- Feel** The stretch in the back of the ankle.
- Imagery** Stay upright as the hips sit back onto the back heel.



## Hamstring

- Set Position** Stand upright, one foot forward. Bend back knee, hands on bent back thigh. Front leg straight. Both feet flat and parallel to the hips.
- Breathing** Exhale, push the hips back, chest lifted and back flat. Hold the stretch and relax. Repeat with the other leg.
- Hold** For 20 seconds + on each side.
- Feel** The stretch in the back of the thigh.
- Imagery** Lift the buttocks up and back, keep the back long and extended.



## Adductors

**Set Position** Stand upright, legs straight, straddled wide apart, toes forward. Bend one knee, hands on bent thigh. Push hips back, keep chest lifted and back flat.

**Breathing** Exhale, bend knee more, push hips back. Hold the stretch and relax. Repeat with the other leg.

**Hold** For 20 seconds + on each side.

**Feel** The stretch in the inner thigh/groin area. Might also feel a stretch in the hamstrings.

**Imagery** Push the buttocks back, chest up with the little toe on the floor.



## Quadriceps

**Set Position** Stand upright. Use wall for balance and support. Flex one leg and raise foot towards buttocks. Hold raised foot with same hand. Slightly flex supporting leg.

**Breathing** Exhale, bring the heel towards the buttocks, keep hips under and knees together. Hold the stretch and relax. Repeat with the other leg.

**Hold** For 20 seconds + on each side.

**Feel** The stretch in the front of the thigh.

**Imagery** Like a stork, draw the foot into the buttocks and the knee down towards the floor.



## Hip Flexors

**Set Position** Stand upright. One foot forward. Bend front knee, back heel lifted, weight on the ball of the back foot. Hands on hips.

**Breathing** Exhale, tuck hips under, maintain body weight on the back foot. Keep front knee bent on alignment with the ankle. Hold the stretch and relax. Repeat with the other leg.

**Hold** For 20 seconds + on each side.

**Feel** The stretch in the front of the hip.

**Imagery** Feel the front of the body open up.



## Illiotibial Band (ITB)

**Set Position** Stand upright. Cross legs, feet flat and parallel with the hips. Raise same arm as back leg overhead. Other hand on hip.

**Breathing** Exhale, flex from the waist to the side towards the front leg. Top arm back, shoulders relaxed. Hold the stretch and relax. Repeat with the other leg.

**Hold** For 20 seconds + on each side.

**Feel** The stretch in the outer thigh. Might feel in the back.

**Imagery** Reach up with the arm whilst pushing the hip to the side.



## Piriformis

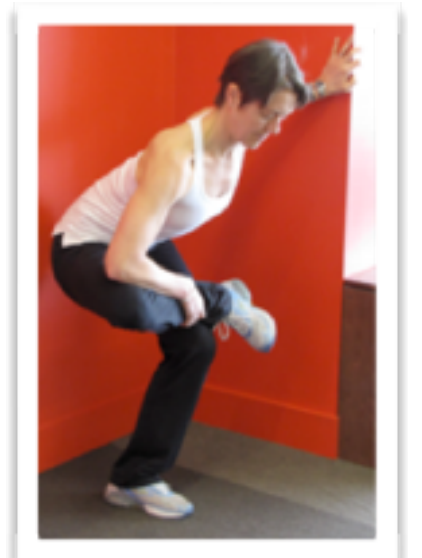
**Set Position** Stand upright. Use a wall for balance and support. Cross one foot onto the opposite thigh. Ankle flexed. Bend supporting leg. Hold raised ankle with same hand, elbow rests on knee.

**Breathing** Exhale, push hips back, bend knees deeper. Chest up, flat back. Hold the stretch and relax. Repeat with the other leg.

**Hold** For 20 seconds + on each side.

**Feel** The stretch in the buttocks and hip area

**Imagery** Sitting in a chair with legs crossed



## Deltoids and Pectorals

**Set Position** Stand upright, feet hip width apart, knees flexed. Cross wrists and interlock the hands. Straighten arms overhead.

**Breathing** Exhale, extend elbows behind the ears. Hold the stretch and relax.

**Hold** For 20 seconds +.

**Feel** The stretch in the shoulders and chest.

**Imagery** Like a pencil, from tips of fingers to feet, a plum line.

