

First Strides

Stretching Handout

1. **Side-to-Side Lunges:** Standing feet spread apart. Bend one knee at a time and lunge side-to-side. Do 8 – 16 repetitions and then HOLD the stretch on both sides for a count of 8 – 16.

2. **Gastroc Stretch:** Standing feet spread apart. Turn your body to one side. Both feet should be pointing in the same direction. Front knee is bent. Hands above bent knee. Typically one uses a wall or tree to push against to increase the stretch. Hold for a count of 8 – 16. Repeat other leg.

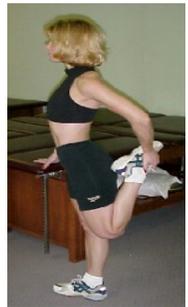


3. **Soleus Stretch:** Facing front. Step one foot behind the other about shoulder width. Both feet are pointing in the same direction. Typically one uses a wall or tree to push against to increase the stretch. Bend both knees and HOLD for a count of 8 – 16. To increase the stretch of the shin muscles, turn the back toes inward. Repeat other leg.



4. **Hamstring Stretch:** After completing the soleus stretch, shift your weight onto your back leg, and bend at the knee. Straighten the front leg, and lean forward, reaching for your toes. Hold for a count of 8-16. Repeat other leg.

5. **Quad Stretch:** Standing feet shoulder width apart. Balance and bend the knee and grab the foot/shoe behind the buttocks. (Partners work for this) Hold for a count of 8 – 16. Repeat other leg.



6. **Calf Raises:** Standing feet shoulder width apart. Lift both heels slowly together and repeat for a count of 8 – 16.

TIPS ON HOW TO STRETCH:

1. Move slowly into the stretch.
2. Hold the stretch for 10 seconds prior to exercise (warm up) and for 30 seconds post exercise (cool down).
3. Breathe and relax while holding the stretch.
4. NEVER do any bouncy stretching, always hold and relax.
5. Focus on the muscle you are trying to stretch and then try to lengthen it.
6. You may be able to breathe out and push the stretch slightly further half way through the stretch. This is most important during the cool down.
7. Move slowly out of the stretch.
8. Remember to stretch both sides.
9. Increasing the range of movement around a joint will help the blood flow to the muscles surrounding the joint and increase circulation that will carry away any lactic acids that may build up in the muscle.
10. Do more stretching than just warm up and cool down. A lot of gyms offer stretch classes where the aim is to permanently and progressively increase your flexibility.
11. Stretch often throughout the day.