

Swimming Stretches

Stretching should be done before and after activity or whenever you feel lik

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 -ake CO 80133
 1-800-333-1307
 website: <http://www.stretchin>
 e-mail: office@stretching.com
 fax: 719-481-9058

How to Stretch:

Stretching should be done slowly without bouncing. Stretch to where you feel a slight, easy stretch. Hold this feeling for 5-30 seconds. As you hold this stretch, the feeling of tension should diminish. If it doesn't, just ease off slightly into a more comfortable stretch. The easy stretch reduces tension and readies the tissues for the developmental stretch.

After holding the easy stretch move a fraction of an inch farther into the stretch until you feel mild tension again. This is the developmental stretch which should be held for 5-30 seconds. This feeling of stretch tension should also slightly diminish or stay the same. If the tension

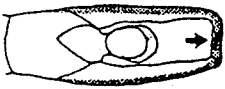
The dotted areas are those areas of the body where you will most likely feel the stretch.

Increases or becomes painful, you are overstretching. Ease off a bit to a comfortable stretch. The developmental stretch reduces tension and will safely increase flexibility.

Hold only stretch tensions that feel good to you. The key to stretching is to be relaxed while you concentrate on the area being stretched. Your breathing should be slow, deep and rhythmic. Don't worry about how far you can stretch. Stretch relaxed and limberness will become just one of the many by-products of regular stretching.

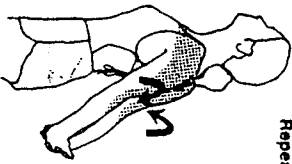
Note: If you have had any recent surgery, muscle or joint problem, please consult your personal health care professional before starting a stretching or exercise program.

1 Arms & Shoulders:



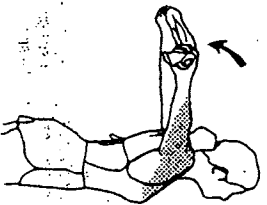
In a standing or sitting position, interlace your fingers above your head. Now, with your palms facing upward, push your arms slightly back and up. Feel the stretch in arms, shoulders, and upper back. Hold stretch for 15 seconds. Do not hold your breath. This stretch is good to do anywhere, anytime. Excellent for slumping shoulders.

5 Repeat stretch 1 6



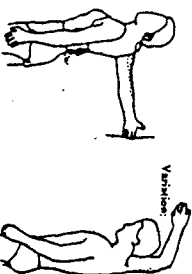
The next stretch is done with your fingers interlaced behind your back. Slowly turn your elbows inward while straightening your arms. An excellent stretch for shoulders and arms. This is good to do when you find yourself slumping forward from your shoulders. This stretch can be done at any time. Hold for 5-15 seconds. Do twice.

7



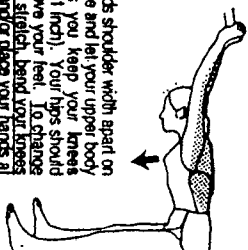
Hold a towel near both ends so that you can move it with straight arms up, over your head and down behind your back. Do not strain or force it. Your hands should be far enough apart to allow for relatively free movement up, over and down. To isolate and add further stretch to the muscles of a particular area, hold the stretch at any place during this movement for 10-20 seconds.

8



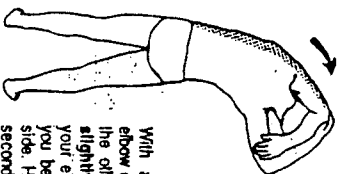
To stretch the front of the shoulders and arms you can use a wall, doorway, or fence. Face the wall, then pull your right arm behind you at shoulder height against the wall. Keep your right shoulder close to the wall as you slowly turn your head over your left shoulder to look in the direction of your right hand. Looking over your shoulder should create a stretch in your right arm and shoulder. Hold a comfortable stretch for 15-20 seconds. Do both sides. VARIATION: Also do the stretch with the arm bent at approximately a 90° angle. This will help further prepare the shoulder and arm for the movements required in swimming.

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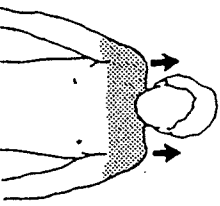
Place both hands shoulder width apart on a fence or ledge and let your upper body drop down as you keep your knees slightly bent (1 inch). Your hips should be directly above your feet. To change the area of the stretch, bend your knees and let a leg and/or place your hands at different heights. Find a stretch that you can hold for at least 30 seconds. This will take some of the kinks out of a tired upper back. The top of the refrigerator or a file cabinet are good to use for this stretch. (Remember to always bend your knees when coming out of the stretch.)

3



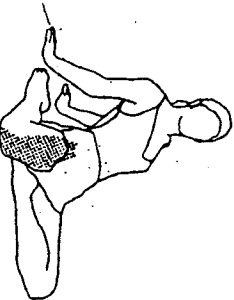
With arms overhead, hold elbow of one arm with the hand of the other arm. Keeping hip slightly bent (1 inch), gently pull your elbow behind your head to the side. Hold an easy stretch for 15-20 seconds. Do both sides. Keep your knees slightly bent will help you better balance.

4



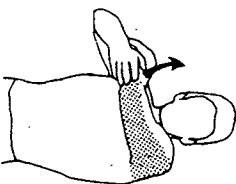
Shoulder: Strong. Raise the top of your shoulders toward your ears until you feel slight tension in your neck and shoulders. Hold this feeling of tension for 3-5 seconds, then relax your shoulders downward into their normal position. Do this 2-3 times. Good to use at the first signs of tightness or tension in the shoulder and neck area.

2



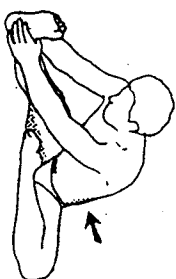
Sit with your right leg bent, with your right heel just to the outside of your right hip. The left leg is bent and the sole of your left foot is next to the inside of your upper right leg. Try not to let your right foot slide out to the side in this position. Now slowly lean straight back until you feel an easy stretch in your right quadriceps. Use hands for balance and support. Hold an easy

2



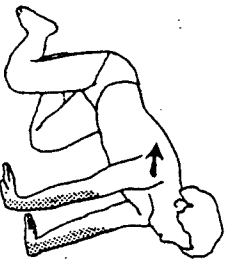
Hold your left arm just above the elbow with your right hand. Now gently pull elbow toward opposite shoulder as you look over your left shoulder. Hold stretch for 15-20 seconds. Do both sides.

4



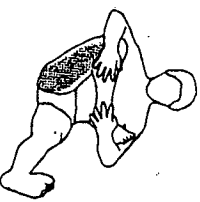
Next straighten your right leg. The sole of your left foot will be resting next to the inside of your straight leg. Lean slightly forward from the hips and stretch the hamstrings of your right leg. Find an easy stretch and relax. If you can't reach your thigh comfortably, use a towel to help you stretch. Hold for 50 seconds. Do not lock your knee. Your right shoulder-are stretch

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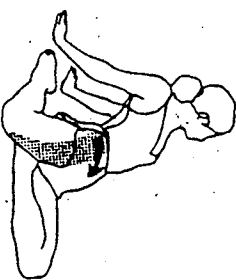
From the position illustrated above, with your palms flat and fingers pointed back toward your knees, slowly lean backwards to stretch the forearms and wrists. Be

1 Legs & Hips:



To stretch the upper hamstrings and hip, hold on to the outside of your ankle with one hand, with your other hand and forearm around your bent knee. Gently pull the leg as one unit toward your chest until you feel an easy stretch in the back of the upper leg. You may want to do this stretch while you rest your back against

2

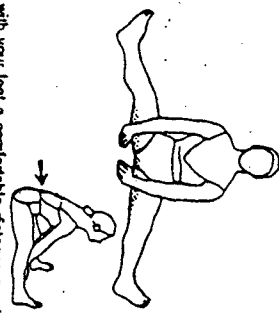


After stretching your quads, practice tightening the buttocks on the side of the bent leg as you turn the hip over. This will help stretch the front of your hip and give a better overall stretch to upper thigh area. After contraction the butt muscles for 5-8 seconds, let the

4

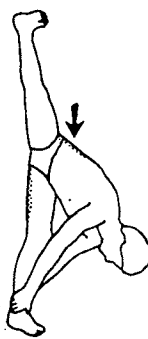
Repeat stretches 1-4 for other leg.

6



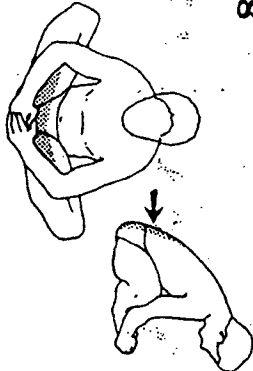
Sit with your feet a comfortable distance apart. To stretch the inside of your upper legs and hips, slowly lean forward FROM THE HIPS. Be sure to keep your quadriceps relaxed and feet upright. Hold for 30 seconds. Keep your hands out in front of you for balance and stability or hold on to something for greater control. Use good posture with this stretch. Concentrate on keeping the lower back flat as you do this stretch. Do not strain.

7



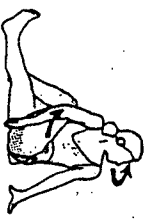
To stretch your left hamstrings and the right side of your back, slowly bend forward from the hips toward the foot of your left leg. Hold for 30 seconds to each side.

8



Put the soles of your feet together with your heels a comfortable distance from your groin. Now, put your hands around your feet and slowly pull yourself forward until you feel an easy stretch in the groin. Make your movement forward by bending from the hips and not from the shoulders. If possible, keep your elbows on the outside of your lower legs for greater stability during the stretch. Hold a comfortable stretch for 30-40 seconds.

9



Sit with your right leg straight. Bend your left leg, cross your left foot over and rest it to the outside of your right knee. Then bend your right elbow and rest it on the outside of your upper left thigh, just above the knee. During the stretch use the elbow to keep this leg stationary with controlled pressure to the inside. Now, with your left hand resting behind you slowly turn your head to look over your left shoulder. Now, with the same arm, rotate your upper body toward your left hand and hips in the same direction (though your legs won't move because your right elbow is keeping the left leg stationary). This should give you a stretch in your lower back and side of hip. Hold for 15 seconds. Do both sides. Don't hold your breath; breathe easily.

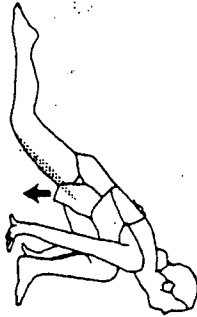
Repeat stretch 8 10 11

11



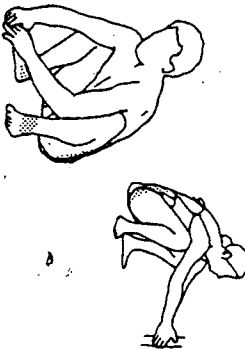
Sit on your feet, your toes pointed behind you. Do not let your feet flare to the outside. If your ankles are tight pull your hands on the outside of your legs on the floor and use your hands for support to help you maintain an easy stretch. Do not strain. Hold for 15-30 seconds.

12



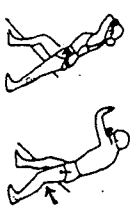
As shown in the drawing above, move one leg forward until the knee of the forward leg is directly over the ankle. Your other knee should be resting on the floor. Now, without changing the position of the knee on the floor or the forward foot, lower the front of your hip downward to create an easy stretch. This stretch should be felt in front of the hip and possibly in your hamstrings and groin. This will help relieve tension in the lower back. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds. Do both legs.

13



With your feet shoulder width apart and pointed out to about a 15° angle, heels on the ground, bend your knees and squat down. If you have trouble staying in this position hold onto something for support. It is a great stretch for your ankles, Achilles tendons, groin, lower back and hips. Hold stretch for 30 seconds. Be careful if you have had any knee problems. If pain is present, discontinue this stretch.

14



To stretch your calf, stand a little ways from a solid support and lean on it with your forearms, your head resting on your hands. Bend one leg and place your foot on the ground in front of you leaving the other leg straight, behind you. Slowly move your hips forward until you feel a stretch in the calf of your straight leg. Be sure to keep the heel of the foot of the straight leg on the ground and your toes pointed straight ahead. Hold an easy stretch for 30 seconds. Do not bounce. Stretch both legs.

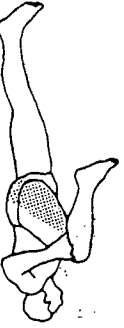
15



Now, to stretch the spine and Achilles tendon, slightly bend the back knee, keeping the foot flat. This gives you a much lower stretch which is also good for maintaining or regaining ankle flexibility. 15 seconds for each leg. This area needs only a slight leaning of stretch.

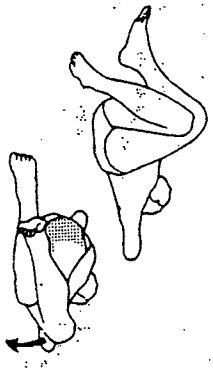
3

Repeat stretch 2 4



Get straighten both legs and relax, then pull your left leg toward your chest. For this stretch keep the back of your head on the mat, if possible, but don't strain. Hold in easy stretch for 30 seconds. Repeat, pulling your right leg toward your chest.

5



From a bent knee position, interlace your fingers behind your head and lift the left leg over the right leg. From here, use your left leg to pull your right leg toward the floor until you feel a stretch along the side of your hip and lower back. Stretch and relax. Keep the upper back, shoulders, and elbows flat on the floor. The idea is not to touch the floor with your right knee but to stretch within your limits. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat stretch for other side.

6

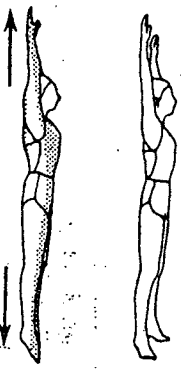
Repeat stretch 3 7



Bend your leg and, with your opposite hand, pull that bent leg up and over your other leg as shown above. Turn your head to look toward the hand of the arm that is straight (head should be resting on the floor). Make sure the back of your shoulders are kept flat on the floor. Now, using your hand on your thigh (resting just above the knee), pull your bent leg down toward the floor until you feel the right stretch leaning in your lower back and side of hip. Keep feet and ankles relaxed. Hold a comfortable stretch for 30 seconds, each side.

8

Repeat stretch 1 9



Straighten out your arms and legs. Point your fingers and toes as you stretch as far as you can. Stretch and then relax. This is a good stretch for the entire body. Hold for 5 seconds.

2



Interlace your fingers behind your head and rest your arms on the mat. Using the power of your arms, slowly bring your head, neck, and shoulders forward until you feel a slight stretch. Hold an easy stretch for 5 seconds. Repeat three times. Do not overstretch.

Bob and Jean Anderson, creators of this stretching chart are also the authors of the book STRETCHING.

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Stretching Inc.
P. O. Box 767
Palmer Lake CO 80133-0767
fax (719)461-9058
1-800-333-1307

