



## **Stretching is Good for the Body**

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Today, millions of people are discovering the benefits of physical activity. You see people out walking, jogging, bicycling, swimming, and performing activities. To help move, stretching is very important. It gives the body flexibility for movement.

Stretching is a deliberate lengthening of muscles and what that does is it helps increase the body's flexibility and the joint range of motion. It is a very important part of any exercise routine or rehabilitation routine. As muscles lengthen they allow joints to move more freely.

You do not need to be a top athlete to stretch. Stretching is designed for everyone and any age. You do not need to be in top physical condition or a pro athlete to stretch. You can work at a desk and still need to stretch the muscles every so often so you can move and do your job or activity more efficiently.

The best time for stretching is anytime. In the morning before you start the day, it helps loosen you up and get you going. It can relieve some tension at work by just stretching to relax the muscles.

Stretching should be a part of your daily life and you will find that regular stretching can be very beneficial. It will make the body feel more relaxed, helps you move in a more free and easy movement and increases your range of motion. It can also make strenuous activities a little bit easier as it prepares the muscles for what they are going to be doing such as downhill skiing, swimming or cycling. It also helps in body awareness. You get to know your body and how to keep in touch with your muscles and you get to know yourself. It can also help circulation and it just feels good.

There is a proper stretching technique and even some pro athletes do not stretch properly. One of the things people need to do is warm up your muscles first, just by moving them around, low intensity for about 5 minutes. When you stretch, you need to hold that position for at least 30 seconds. It may seem like a long time, but that is the best length of time for stretching out your muscles. The proper stretching technique will actually feel good when it is done correctly. You do not have to push it for how far you can go, it's a slow, controlled motion and is not meant to be painful at all. You do not want to bounce when you are stretching. That can cause some muscle damage with what they call micro tears and that is what will hurt. You need to breathe freely while you stretch. You should always stretch both sides. If it feels tight on one side, it is probably a little tight on the other side as well.

Stretching should be done before and after activity. It helps the muscles before you start your activity and it also helps afterwards to loosen and relax those same muscles that have just been worked out. There is always a good time for stretching.