



Stretching out – in general

Exercises for stretching out can be used as intermezzos during the training session – in between warming up, training, warming down, and in between the different training elements.

The more dynamic exercises for stretching out goes along with the functional part of the training, while the more slow and static exercises are a good way to finish the training session. The slow exercises are also great as a part of a “good morning” and a “good night” routine.

The purpose of stretching out is:

- To increase the athletes' flexibility and range of movement
- To prevent injuries
- To prevent harmful movements
- To create wellbeing
- To prevent soreness

Stretching out exercises primarily involves ligaments, muscle fibres and sinews – and increases the blood circulation.

Through the stretching out exercises we try to increase our flexibility and range of movement. But when done the wrong way the stretching out exercises may have negative consequences such as minor injuries and sometimes even hypermobility and an alteration of the normal muscle reactions.

When using the exercises to end the training session the exercises must be calm and slowly. Remember, in general, the following when stretching out:

- Do the stretches calm and slowly.
- The athlete must be able to feel the stretch in the involved muscles.
- Hold the stretch for about 20 - 30 seconds.
- The stretch should be done slowly and deeply in order to overcome unwanted spasms.
- Repeat the stretch 2-4 times and also 1 or 2 times on a daily basis.
- In every single exercise the athlete should slide dynamically into the static position.
- Remember breathing normally during the stretching out.
- Be relaxed in the rest of the body when stretching out.

Stretching out – specifically for parasport and RaceRunning

For CP athletes and athletes with other muscular or neurological issues the exercises must be chosen carefully and carried out in a way that takes into account the athletes' specific physical and neurological abilities. Never use any force against spasticity or a tight muscle. Instead, support the muscle in order for the athlete to conduct the exercise correctly and pay attention to the following:

- Slack muscles or ligaments with low tonus should never be stretched out. Use massage instead.
- Poor or irregular feedback from positioning/balance-senses.
- General and specific tonus in the muscles that are stretched out.

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- Injuries on bones and ligaments because of hyperactive reflexes or spasticity.
- All the time spent in a wheel chair may cause poor sitting positions and a decreased control of the bodily movements.

Stretching out, exercise nr. 1: Stretching the front of the thigh

1. The athlete has a firm grip on the frame of the RaceRunning bike.
2. The assistant slowly lifts the foot backwards and up.
3. The hips must be in a vertical position - do not lift the foot any higher.
4. Hold the stretch for approximately 30 seconds and then lower the foot slowly.

Repeat 1 through 4 with the other leg.



Stretching out, exercise nr. 2: Stretching the inside of the thigh

1. Standing or lying on the back. Spread the legs as much as possible.
2. If standing, bend one of the legs and stretch the other, if possible.
 - a. The athlete bends the bended leg even more;
 - b. Or the assistant presses gently against the inner side of the knee.
3. 1 and 2 repeated for the other leg.
4. If lying, the athlete himself/herself or the assistant gently pushes the legs apart.
5. Remember to hold the stretch for 30 seconds.



Stretching the inside of the thigh



Stretching out, exercise nr. 3: Stretching the back of the thigh and the peroneus.

Preferably done sitting on the saddle or holding on to the saddle.

1. Keep the back taut.
2. Stretch the left leg and push back the buttocks.
3. Press the toes of the stretched leg upwards (or the assistant may lift the stretched leg upwards).
4. Hold the stretch for about 30 seconds.
5. Do 2 through 4 with the right leg.

Remember: Stop stretching before you reach the threshold of pain. Do not overstretch. The same exercise can be done lying on the back and with the assistant lifting the stretched leg upwards and holding the other leg down.



Stretching the back of the thigh



Stretching out, exercise nr. 4: Stretching the hip.

This exercise can be done standing on the RaceRunning bike. Tighten the abdominal muscles in order to spare the loin.

1. Stretch and press the left leg backwards while holding on to the RaceRunning bike.
2. The assistant grabs with the left hand just above the left knee and places the right hand on the athletes' buttock.
3. The assistant pulls with the left hand the stretched leg upwards and pushes gently with the right hand on the athletes' buttock.
4. Hold this position for 30 seconds.
5. 1 through 4 is repeated with the other leg.



Stretching the hip

Stretching out, exercise nr. 5: Stretching the chest muscles.

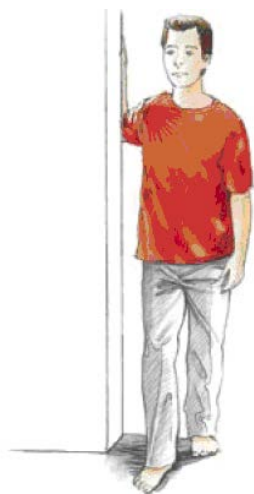
This exercise can be done sitting or lying and in two different ways:

A

1. The assistant stands behind the athlete, places his/her underarms below the underarms of the athlete.
2. By stabilizing the athletes' back with his/her own body the assistant raises the athletes' underarms and pulls them backwards slowly.
3. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.

B

1. The assistant stands behind the athlete.
2. With his/her left hand the assistant grabs the athletes' left underarm and places his/her right hand on the athletes' shoulder.
3. With his/her left hand the assistant pulls the athletes' left underarm gently upwards and backwards and pushes gently on the shoulder with the right hand.
4. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.
5. Repeat 2 through 4 for the other side.
- 6.



Stretching the chest muscles



Stretching out, exercise nr. 6. Stretching the neck muscles.

This exercise is divided into four sections: the left and right side of the neck; forwards and backwards. The athlete may sit down or stand up – also on the RaceRunning bike. The assistant may stabilize the athletes' body if needed so.

1. Press the left ear towards the right shoulder and hold the stretch.
2. Press the chin towards the chest and hold the stretch.
3. Press the right ear towards the left shoulder and hold the stretch.
4. Press the head gently backwards and hold the stretch.
5. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.

Note: Item 4 should not be carried out with athletes with spasticity.

*Keep the shoulders
down and look down.*



Stretch of neck muscles

