

Warm-up & Stretching Exercises for Alphas

Every workout session should start and end with warm-up and stretching exercises. This reduces your risk of getting hurt, and releases muscle tension and soreness.

Warm-up and stretching exercises should always be completed prior to beginning more strenuous activities to reduce the risk of injury. It's also important to stretch after completing your exercise session to release muscle tension and soreness.

Some people are naturally more flexible. Your flexibility depends on genetics, gender, age, and physical activity. The less active you are, the less flexible you're likely to be. In fact, as you age, you tend to lose flexibility. Not because you're old, but because you may be less active.

But, just like your strength and endurance, you can improve your flexibility with regular training.

Stretch for success

Before stretching:

- Spend at least 5-10 minutes to warm up. Stretching cold muscles can cause injury.
- Begin with a simple, low-intensity warm-up, like brisk walking in place for 10 minutes.
- Stretch all of the major muscle groups.

While stretching:

1. Start each stretch slowly.
Inhale at the beginning of the stretch.
Exhale as you gently stretch the muscle.
2. Stretch to the point of mild discomfort.
Hold each stretch for at least 10 seconds, then slowly release.
3. Repeat three times.

Avoid these stretching mistakes:

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- Don't bounce. Holding a stretch is more effective, and you have less risk of hurting yourself.
- Don't stretch before you warm up.
- Don't strain or push a muscle too far. If it hurts, ease up.
- Don't hold your breath.
- Don't stretch right after a meal.

Recommendations for Warm-up and Stretching

- **Frequency (How often):** Usually 5 times per week, or daily, if for postural correction/awareness
- **Duration (How long):** Hold each stretch for 10 to 30 seconds
- **Intensity (How hard):** 3 to 5 repetitions per stretch

Calf stretch:

1. Place hands on a wall or chair. Stand with your right foot in front, left foot behind.
2. Lean forward keeping your right heel touching.
3. Hold 30 seconds while counting out loud.



Quadriceps stretch:

1. Use a wall, table, or other support for balance.
2. Grab either your right or left ankle.
3. Gently pull your foot toward your buttocks until you feel a stretch on the upper part of your leg.

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Hip stretch:

1. Stand with your feet parallel.
2. Bend your front leg, keeping the knee in line with your ankle.
3. Lean into the stretch, keeping your back leg straight.
4. Push your hips forward slightly. Hold 5 seconds. Repeat on the other side.



Hamstring stretch:

1. Lie on your back with both knees bent.
2. Keeping one foot flat, put your hands behind one knee, and slowly try to straighten that leg.

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You can't change your genetics, but with regular stretching, you can become more flexible.

Get more exercise recommendations:

[Strength Training](#)

[Cardio Endurance Training](#)

For more in-depth information on this topic, please visit the [Big Fat Reference Guide \(BFRG\)](#). If you are enrolled in AlphaNet's Subscriber Portal, you can access the BFRG [here](#).