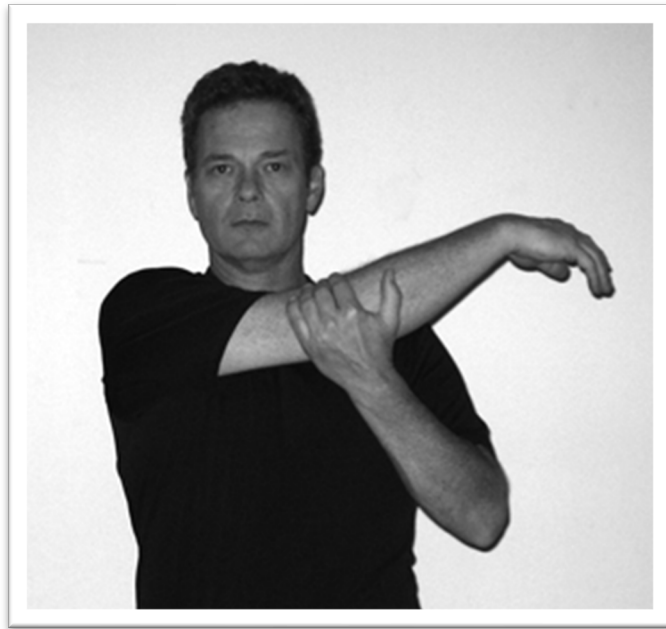


Stretch for Success



Manual of effective stretching for maintenance and to improve the rehabilitation of injury with the athletic body

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Stretch for Success

I am asked all of the time, is it better to stretch before or after a workout or both? Once in a while I will get the question from people, who cut right to the chase and ask, if I only have time for a small stretching routine, is it better before or after a workout. My answer is yes!

To explain I need to look at human anatomy for the correct answer to the questions. As we use our muscles, tiny fibers shorten (or contract), when we stop using our muscles these fibers relax (or extend).

If we maintain good muscle symmetry or balance, most muscles in our body are equal in size, shape, and function in relationship to each other. This balance is our basic goal but is rarely the case.

Just looking at the average person we see hunched or rounded shoulders (which mean the chest muscles are too dominate compared to the upper back muscles). I treat a multitude of people with low back stains because their hip flexor muscles are too tight and the lower back muscles are too weak.

If we identify our weak muscles and strengthen them more during our workout, this will improve our muscular balance, but we need to take it a step further.

Postural imbalance should be addressed because repetitive sitting will shorten our hip flexor muscles and all we need to do is hunch or round our shoulders repetitively and all of the hard work we have done in the gym to create balance of our muscles is thrown out the window.

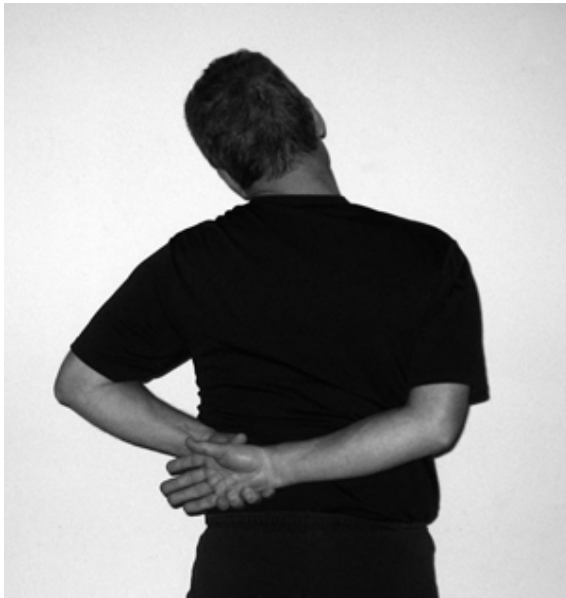
Now back to the stretching questions. By stretching before a workout, we are warming up the muscle with blood to prevent injury; this also helps to reduce muscle tension or scar tissue formation from past injuries.

Unless we strengthen our muscles equally on all sides some muscles will become dominate and lose the ability to extend to their full resting length. By stretching after our workouts, this will insure the muscle fibers return to their natural balance and minimize the after workout soreness called “delayed onset muscle soreness”.

Stretch for Success Pre-Workout

Each stretch should be done for a minimum of a few seconds and a maximum of a few minutes. This is dependent on how much time you have before your workout.

Go to your end range with minimal discomfort. Perform these stretches daily or as often as possible.



Neck and Trapezius

Place hands behind the back.

Grasp the wrist.

Pull the wrist to one side, so you have a bent elbow and the other elbow is fairly straight.

Slowly bring your ear to the bent elbow side.

Repeat on the other side.

Mid Back

Cross bent elbows over head.

Lean upper body to one side.

Repeat on the other side.





Upper Back and Shoulder

Place straight arm across the chest.

With the other arm or hand, pull straight arm toward the center of the body.

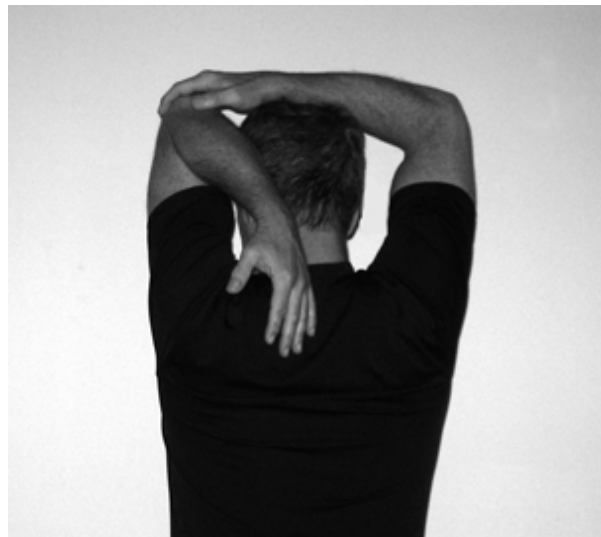
Repeat on the other side.

Triceps and Shoulder

Bring hand behind head (on the same side) to the upper back.

Gently pull the elbow back and downward, moving the hand down toward the center of the upper back.

Repeat on the other side.





Chest and Shoulder

Bend at the waist; interlock both hands behind the back with straight elbows.

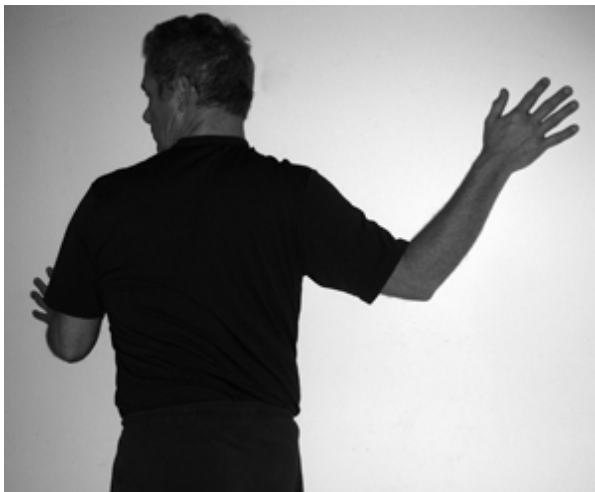
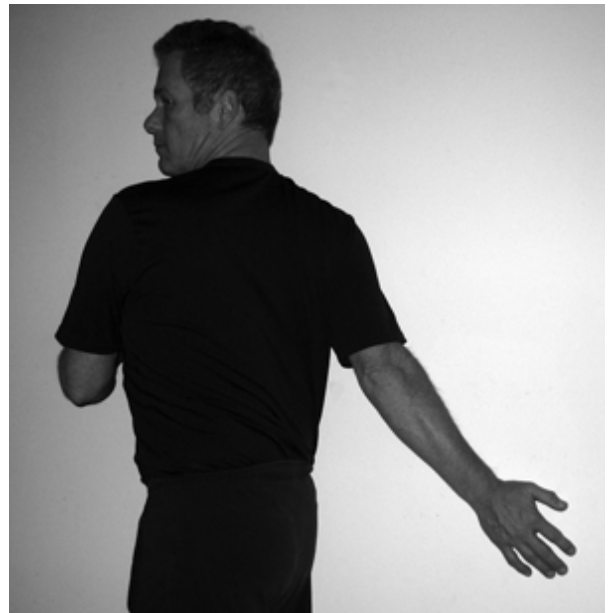
Bring the shoulders together, and then relax.

Slowly raise the straight arms.

Place shoulder and side of the body against the wall.

Push shoulder into the wall, while rotating the body away from the wall.

Having the arm straight with the hand below will stretch the biceps.



Having the elbow bent with the hand above will stretch the chest.

Repeat on the other side.



Hip Flexor

Kneel on your bent knee.

Lean your pelvis forward by bending the knee more.

Repeat on the other side.

Hamstring

Place your foot on a chair.

Rest your chest on your bent knee.

Back away from your elevated foot.

Repeat on the other side.





Calf

Place hands on the wall, while one leg is straight with the other knee bent.

Push against the wall.

Repeat on the other side.

Quad

Place hand on the wall while bending the knee.

Grasp the foot or ankle.

Repeat on the other side.



Stretch for Success Post-Workout

Repeat Pre-Workout Stretches in addition to a few extra ones.



Neck

Fully retract the head backwards as far as possible.

Release to the starting position.





Upper Back and Shoulder

Place towel in one hand behind the back.

Grasp end of towel with other hand.

Slowly crawl fingers toward each other.

Repeat on the other side.

Place towel in one hand behind the back.

Grasp end of towel with other hand.

Pull top of towel up, then pull bottom of towel down.

Slowly saw back and forth.

Repeat on the other side.



Hamstring and calf



Lie on the floor with towel in both hands.

Place one foot in the middle of the towel.

Pull towel toward the body.

Repeat on the other side.

Hamstring and Glutes

Lie on the floor with knee bent.

Place hand on the sole of the foot.

Pull the foot toward the center of the body and to the floor.

Repeat on the other side.



Low Back and Glutes



Lie on the floor.

Cross one straight leg to the other side.

Repeat on the other side.

Back and Abdominal

With hands and knees on the floor.

Arch back and lower head.



Round back and raise head.

Abdominal



Lie face down on the floor.

Place hands or forearms on the floor.

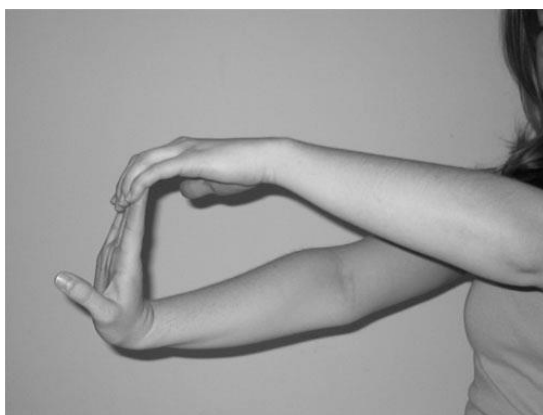
Raise upper body.

Forearms and Hands

Make sure that your elbow is fully extended but not locked.

Flex your wrist gently. Use your other hand to pull the flexed hand toward your body.

Pull for five seconds and repeat.



Put your arm straight in front of you. Make sure that your elbow is fully extended but not locked.

Use your other hand to pull up and extend the hand by pulling up the fingers. Pull for five seconds, then release. Repeat.



Place your palm on a flat surface to stretch the forearm and extend the wrist.

With your other hand stroke up and down the forearm a few times.

Place your knuckles or flexed wrist on a flat surface to stretch the forearm.

With your other hand stroke up or down the forearm a few times.





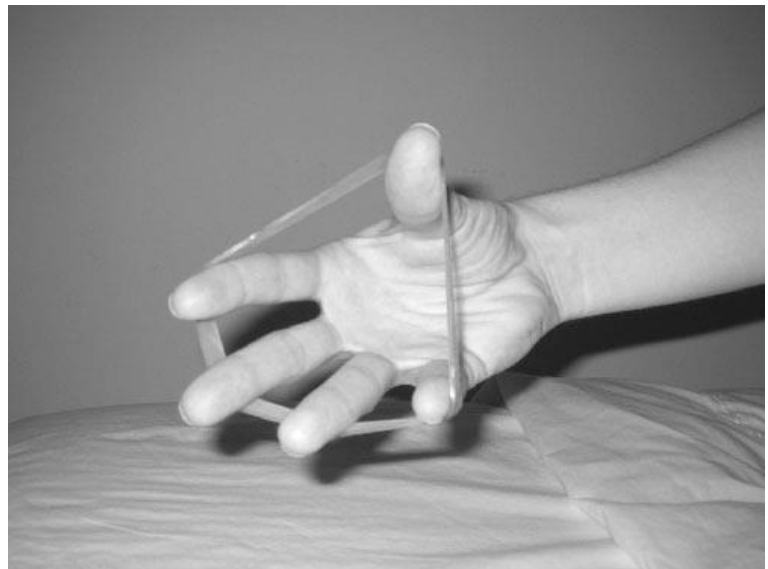
Twist and wring the forearm muscles with the other hand in both directions.

Then repeat other forearm.

Place a rubber band around all fingers.

Open and close the hand for a maximum of 30 seconds.

This exercise strengthens the extensor side and takes pressure off of the flexor side.



Treatment for Inflammation of the Elbow

Place finger or thumb below the protrusion of bone that sticks out at the side of the elbow.

Cross fiber massage this area (X) as deep as possible for up to 10 seconds.

Do the same for the other side of the elbow.

Ice this area for up to 2 minutes, after treatment. Continue each day for 5 days.

