

Health Promotion Series-Physical Activity

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Stretching

Stretching is an important part of your exercise routine. Sometimes we are so focused on exercising that stretching may take a back seat. Stretching does have some benefits even though at this time research studies have been showing mixed results. Some benefits are that due to stretching improving your flexibility, your joint range of motion is also likely to improve which in turn may help to decrease your risk of injury. Athletic performance may be improved as well. Another important aspect is increased blood flow to the muscles. Stretching can be detrimental however if not correctly performed. When you stretch, follow the below tips to ensure you are completing it safely and effectively:



- Stretching is not a warm-up. Always warm up with light activity for 5-10 minutes prior to stretching or complete stretching after exercising
- Focus on major muscle groups
- Don't bounce
- Hold the stretch for about 30 seconds
- The stretch should not be painful
- Stretch for your specific sport
- Stretch regularly, at least 2-3 times a week
- Stretch with movement such as with Tai Chi or Yoga



<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/stretching/art-20047931>

stay strong ♡