



**Welcome to Lesson 1: Stretches and Warm-Ups**

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**Lesson Description**

In order to prevent injury, it is essential for one to regularly perform stretching exercises. Practicing the following lesson everyday will yield the best results. Ideally, you should practice these stretches in the morning or before physical activity. This lesson will act as a critical foundation as you continue your training in injury prevention, and many key concepts will be covered.

**Introduction to Stretches and Warm-Ups**

- Stretching is an essential element to injury prevention, and can also be used for warm-ups
- One should perform stretches every day in order to better protect the body

**Stretch #1**

**Instructions**

- Lie flat on your back with your hips on the floor
- Lift one leg up straight, with the sole of your foot facing up toward the ceiling
- You may use your hands to pull the upright leg toward your chest, but be sure to keep your back and hips on the floor

**Key Points**

- Flat back
- Hips on the floor
- Keep the leg straight
- Perform this stretch for 15-20 seconds, exhaling when you alternate legs

**Stretch #2**

**Instructions**

- Lie flat on your back with knees bent
- Taking a large inhale, raise your straight arms above your head
- As you exhale, swing your arms down and lift both of your legs straight up, as in exercise #1
- Use your hands to grasp the backs of your calves
- Contract your abdomen and keep your hips on the floor. Do not bend at the knees
- For the second part of this stretch, lift your buttocks, hips and abdomen off the floor, keeping your feet and shoulders grounded
- While inhaling, raise your arms above your head
- As you exhale, bring your arms back down to your sides, and return to your initial position (back flat on the floor)
- These two motions should be fluid. Practice part 1 and part 2 together, and remember to breath with our movements



**Key Points**

- Combine the 2 parts of the stretch so that it flows as one exercise
- Keep the legs straight
- Inhale and exhale with the movements
- Perform each position of this stretch for 15-20 seconds. Perform the whole exercise twice

**Stretch #3**

**Instructions**

- Lie flat on your back and raise both legs up. It is ok for the knees to be bent
- Grab your right leg and bend it at a 45-degree angle, placing the ankle over the thigh of the left leg. Reflect this motion when stretching the left leg
- Use your hands to maximize the stretch- use one hand to lightly pull your foot toward your chest, and use the other hand to push your knee lightly away from you
- Keep your head on the floor, and your supporting leg at a 90-degree angle

**Key Points**

- Keep your back flat and head/neck relaxed
- Your stretched leg should be bent at 45-degrees; your supporting leg should be bent at 90-degrees
- Inhale and exhale with the movements
- Hold the stretch on each leg for 15-20 seconds. Perform the stretch 3 times per leg

**Stretch #4**

**Instructions**

- Sitting up as straight as possible, cross one leg over the other so that the side of your calf is resting on the thigh of the bottom leg
- Both knees should be tightly bent. The bottom leg should be bent enough so that your heel is reaching your buttocks
- Lean forward with straight arms and place your palms flat on the floor. This should stretch your back, and press your abdomen to your crossed legs

**Key Points**

- Keep your knees tightly bent
- Sit up as straight as possible
- Exhale as you lean forward to maximize the stretch
- Hold the stretch on each leg for 15-20 seconds. Perform the stretch 2-3 times per leg



**Stretch #5**

**Instructions**

- Start out sitting upright with your feet tucked under your buttocks
- As you slide one leg out and hold it at 90-degrees, keep both arms straight with hands on the ground for balance
- Keep your fingertips on the floor, not your palms. Inhale and stretch your chest and back forward
- You should feel the stretch in your back thigh and your abdomen
- When alternating legs, spend several seconds stretching forward- keep your feet under your butt, and reach your arms far forward, keeping your head down. Continue into the next leg

**Key Points**

- Keep your front leg at 90-degrees
- Keep your back leg flat- the top of your back foot should be resting on the floor
- Lean forward to get a full-body stretch
- Inhale and exhale with the movements
- Hold the stretch on each leg for 15-20 seconds. Perform the stretch 2-3 times per leg

**Stretch #6**

**Instructions**

- This stretch is a variation of the previous exercise, stretch #5
- Starting the same position as the previous stretch, move your outside hand slightly further away from your body, so it is no longer parallel with your shoulders
- Twist your hips in the direction of your forward leg
- Extend your chest and neck forward. You may position your resting hand on the forward knee to maximize the stretch
- Do not rotate your entire body- focus on only rotating your hips, while keeping your chest and back leg straight

**Key Points**

- Keep your body straight and pointing forward- only rotate your hips
- Make sure your supporting arm is not directly under your shoulder. It should be moved slightly away from you so you have space to turn your hips
- Hold the stretch on each side for 15-20 seconds. Perform the stretch 2-3 times per side

### Stretch #7

#### Instructions

- Sit on your bent legs, with your feet under your buttocks. Your feet should be together, and your knees should be spread apart
- With your arms straight, stretch forward as far as you can
- Keep your buttocks on the heels of your feet. Do not get up from them as you are stretching
- Keep your head down. Put the pressure of the stretch on your inner thighs and your shoulders. Relax your hips

#### Key Points

- Keep your buttocks on your heels
- Do not bend your outstretched arms
- Relax your hips
- Hold the stretch for 15-20 seconds

### Stretch #8

#### Instructions

- Roll onto your shoulders and put both of your legs up into the air. Keep your legs relaxed
- Start out by using your hands to support your back. Your elbows, shoulders, and head should act as your supporters on the floor
- When comfortable, straighten your legs and bring your feet together. Keep the soles of your feet flat. Your toes should be pointed downward toward the floor
- Remove your hands from your back and place them on the floor. Use your finger tips to support you as you slowly lower your back and legs
- Once you have lowered your back and legs, move into the previous stretches

#### Key Points

- Ensure that your feet are flat and your toes are pointed downward, toward the floor
- When using your hands to support your body, remember to put them on your lower back- not your buttocks
- Lower yourself out of this stretch in a very slow, controlled manner. This will strengthen your back and abdomen
- Practice all of the stretches so that you are able to move fluidly from one position into another. Remember to inhale and exhale slowly with your movements
- Hold this stretch for 15-20 seconds

### Review

#### Summary

- These stretches are the first steps to preparing your body for training
- Stretching and warming-up on a daily basis is key to ensuring that you prevent injury
- Once your warm-up session is complete, spend some time breathing deeply. Inhale through your nose, exhale through your mouth

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