

Personal Training by Robert J. Bovee

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STRETCHING FOR SUCCESS

Stretching, often the most overlooked part of a work-out, is in fact a vital part of a complete program. Stretching should be done (both before and after) either an aerobic or weight training routine.

Stretching is usually considered just to be a type of movement that improves flexibility, when it actually has many more benefits. Such benefits include a reduction in stress by relaxing the muscle, prevention of injury to the joints and tendons, and increased muscular strength as well. The safest form of stretching is known as static stretching, which is a slow, non-bouncing stretch. Recent studies have shown that this form of stretching helps to reduce immediate muscle soreness that results from a hard workout. Most of us know that stretching is used to relieve a muscle cramp, but this research indicates that static stretching decreases the molecular activity within the muscle, therefore explaining its effectiveness for relieving soreness.

When performing a stretch make sure that you do not strain the muscle and force it to tense up. One of the main points of stretching is to release tension in the muscle and elongate the muscle fibers. When a tension is created within the muscle that is too excessive, the fibers are shocked with pain and this is counterproductive. It is very important to seek professional help on the correct stretches and form of those stretches because damage may occur if done incorrectly.

One goal of stretching is to extend your muscle through a complete range of motion. During everyday activities a muscle moves through only a portion of its range of motion. In weight training we are taught to move the weight through a complete range of motion. Because stretching enables us to move through a greater range, it also enables the muscle to perform a longer and more complete movement. The result of this is that greater forces are produced, therefore stimulating additional muscular adaptations.

For more information, please contact Robert J. Bovee at **(585) 330-0614**.