



Flexibility – The Basic Why’s and How’s What We All Need to Know

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Athletes spend hours training to hone their skills, but few consider stretching a vital component to their athletic performance. According to popular author Frédéric Delavier, stretching has the ability to increase performance levels and should be included in every athlete’s training regimen. In his book, *Delavier’s Stretching Anatomy* (Human Kinetics, 2011), Delavier discusses the top reasons every athlete should stretch.

Why?

1. **Maintain or increase range of motion.** Repetitive athletic movements can reduce range of motion by tightening the muscles and tendons. “A certain tension is required, especially in strength sports, but too much tension and a decreased range of motion can ultimately lead to injury and reduced performance,” Delavier explains. “Stretching regularly can prevent this problem.” In certain fields, like swimming or gymnastics, stretching must be done regularly to increase the range of motion in a joint when that range is synonymous with increased performance.
2. **Increase muscle tone.** Stretching is a powerful signal to strengthen muscles. “Using the muscle’s passive resistance strength, stretching accelerates the speed at which the proteins that compose the muscle fibers are synthesized,” says Delavier. “Your body gains muscle tone, strength, and resilience this way.”
3. **Warm up before working out.** Stretching warms up the muscles, tendons, and joints, which prepares the body for physical exertion.
4. **Relieve stress.** “Thanks to its euphoric oxygenating effects, stretching minimizes stress that can paralyze muscles, which is especially beneficial before a competition,” Delavier says.
5. **Relax, recuperate, and prevent injuries.** Most muscular efforts compress various joints as well as the spine. “Stretching decompresses your back as well as your joints,” Delavier says. “This prevents injuries while accelerating recovery of the joints, tendons, and muscles.”

How?

Proper Stretching Technique – Hold 30-60 seconds and you should feel the stretch become less intense after this duration...if not....you are stretching too hard!!

- Perform balanced stretching. This means you should always stretch the muscles on both sides of your body evenly. Don’t stretch one side more than the other side.
- Avoid over-stretching. Never stretch to the point of pain or discomfort. You will feel slight tension or a pull on the muscle at the peak of the stretch.

- Go slow! Always stretch slowly and evenly. Hold the stretch for 30-60 seconds and release slowly as well.
- Never bounce or jerk while stretching. This can cause injury as a muscle is pushed beyond its ability. All stretches should be smooth, and slow.
- Don't forget to breathe. Flexibility exercises should be relaxing. Deep easy, even breathing is key to relaxation. Never hold your breath while you stretch.

****Remember to**

1. Always plan ahead for what you are going to eat
2. Obtain adequate amounts of protein
3. Work on Flexibility
4. Supplement your diet with a fish oil and multi-vitamin

Let me know if I can help. Email me at architechsports@gmail.com 704-900-8960

God Bless,

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