



Stretches for Runners

Increase Flexibility to Reduce Your Risk of Injury
and Run Longer With Less Fatigue!

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Hints and tips:

- There are sensors in your muscles which make your muscle fibers contract when you go into a stretch, in order to keep you from 'stretching to a tear'. It typically takes 45-60 seconds for this protective reflex to relax. After this time is when you can get a thorough stretch into the muscle and the connective tissue. SO, we hold these stretches for 2 FULL MINUTES(!) to make changes in the fibers and connective tissue to alleviate pressure. Watch a clock...because a few deep breaths will only take you about 30 seconds. At the 45-60 second mark, you will actually feel the stretch change, often creeping into different parts of the muscles.
- Fit in stretches throughout your day, every day, particularly if you are sitting through most of the day, either at a computer or in the car.
- Frequently, pain during running comes from a chronic strain from a posture during sleeping or during your work day. Sitting or standing for long periods shorten most upper leg muscles (causing pressure in back).
- If you find you are too busy to fit any stretches in during the day, the hamstring 'leg up' and the glute stretch can be done quite well on your bathroom sink while brushing your teeth before bed!



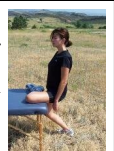
Hip Flexors and Quads: The 'Kneeling Lunge' is a stretch for your hip flexors. Keep your upper body straight and upright. You should feel this stretch in the front hip crease of the BACK leg. Your quads can be stretched by standing on one leg, pulling the heel of the opposite foot to your tush. While in this position, tuck your pelvis, picturing your tailbone curling between your legs.



Hamstrings: The 'leg up' stretch will help the tightness in the hamstrings, which sometimes leads to low back discomfort. Important cues: your heel should be over the edge of the supporting surface to isolate the hamstring muscles (I use my arm of my couch), so you should be able to wiggle your foot without shaking your whole leg. Standing upright, lean your shoulders straight forward, NOT DOWN. At first you may only feel this hamstring stretch at the insertion points of the muscles, at the sit bone and around the knee. We have found this particular stretch to make the most profound difference in chronic tension patterns, when held long enough.



Glutes/Hips: Our 'standing pigeon'. Bring your leg onto a surface as close to perpendicular to your waist as you can, and bend your standing leg until you feel a stretch through the back and side of your bent leg.



IT Band: is a sinister tendon, that frequently causes discomfort in the knee when it is too tight. The 'leaning IT Band Stretch' (stretching the lower leg), and the 'figure four stretch' (stretching the top leg) work to open that muscle up a bit.



Calf Muscles: Most frequently injured muscles in runners. Standing calf stretches can be done on a step or a rock. Important! BOTH straight leg AND bent knee stretches need to be done to prevent some tension patterns related to running injuries! The bent leg stretch reaches the deep calf muscles which are frequently involved with posterior shin splints, Achilles tendonitis and plantar fasciitis.



www.BodyPainMatrix.com

See our website for more information on running injuries and chronic pain.

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