



Warm-up and Cool Down – *Essential for optimal performance!*

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There is much controversy over whether stretching prior to and after exercise or competition can help prevent athletic injuries. There are studies that report over stretching can actually cause injury, while other studies state lack of stretching can cause injury. The bottom line is that most athletic trainers and physicians are in favor of stretching as long as it is done properly. For stretching to be effective, a proper warm-up and cool down must be performed. Whatever the sport or activity, the muscles need to warm up and cool down to achieve optimal performance.

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INFORMATION

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We offer same-day appointments for injured athletes.

Here are some tips for proper warm-up, stretching, and cool down techniques to help prevent injuries:

WARM-UP

1. 3-5 minute light jog. This can be combined with skipping, side stepping, carioca, high knees and butt kicks. It is important for the body to move in multi-directional patterns prior to activity.
2. Stretch major muscle groups first. It is important to HOLD the stretch for at least 20-30 seconds. Stretching should NEVER be painful! Perform each stretch 2-3 times.
3. Stretch sport specific groups next. Example: Tennis player would want to stretch their wrist and shoulders.
4. Start your activity or sport with basic skills. Example: For basketball, start with dribbling drills or shoot around. For soccer and hockey, start with ball and puck handling skills. For volleyball, do passing skills. This helps the body know what is going to be expected of it.

COOL DOWN

1. 3-5 minute light jog. You always want to end how you started!
2. Lightly stretch the major muscle groups. This lets the muscles know you are done using them! Repeat the stretching regimen you used prior to the activity.
3. HYDRATE! Your muscles along with the rest of your body need to cool down. Drinking water or a sport beverage low in sugar helps to flush out any lactic acid that accumulates in the muscles.

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