



# Hockey Stretches

*Stretching exercises should always be performed pre- and post-activity for optimal results.*

Prior to activity, stretching should be completed after a thorough warm up is conducted. This will prepare your muscles for the stretches by increasing blood flow, which in-turn increases the delivery of oxygen and nutrients to the working muscles. A thorough warm up should consist of light physical activity for about 10 minutes and result in a light sweat.

Perform each stretch gently and slowly and avoid any bouncing or jerky movements. Stretch only to the point where you can feel tension in the muscle group and never stretch to the point of pain or discomfort. **DO NOT OVERSTRETCH!** If pain occurs with stretching or activity and does not subside, be sure to follow up with a medical professional. It is also important to remember that a player's flexibility will decrease during a growth spurt. This typically occurs around age 12 for girls and age 14 for boys.

When stretching, breathe slowly and deeply while performing each stretch. Hold each stretch for 20 to 30 seconds. Relax for 10 to 15 seconds between each stretch and perform each stretch 2 to 3 times.

## Static Stretching

### *Standing Achilles Stretch with Knee Straight and Knee Bent (for muscles of the upper and lower calf)*

Stand upright and place one foot in front of the other. Bend your front leg and keep your back leg straight — then push your back heel toward the ground. Repeat with back leg slightly bent and push back heel toward the ground.



### *Standing Quad Stretch*

While holding onto something for support, stand and bend one knee, placing that foot next to your buttocks. Repeat on opposite side.



### *Partner Hamstring Stretch*

Partner 1 lies down on his back, partner 2 pushes one leg up while keeping opposite leg on the ground. The leg that is being bent should maintain knee straight and foot as flat as possible (to optimize stretch). Repeat on opposite leg.



### *Lying Leg Cross-over Stretch (for muscles of the glutes, hip, and lower back)*

Lie on your back and cross one leg over the other. Start with your arms out to the side, then bend the knee of the leg that is crossing over and grab with opposite hand to increase stretch of the gluteal muscles. Let your back and hips rotate with your leg.



Try to keep shoulders on the ground to maximize stretch. Repeat on opposite leg.

*(Continued)*

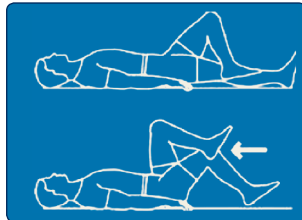
### Groin Stretch

Sit on the floor with your feet together as in the picture, keep your back straight. Pull your feet in toward your groin until you cannot keep your back straight or keep your feet together. Put your elbows on your knees and your hands on your ankles. Press your knees toward the floor; to increase the stretch rotate forward at the hips while keeping your back straight.



### Piriformis Stretch

Lie down on your back and bend one leg, resting the ankle on opposite knee. Bring knee that is straight up towards chest while keeping head and upper back on the ground. (can use hands to pull knee to chest)



### Ankle Rotation Stretch

Raise one foot off the ground and slowly rotate your foot and ankle in all directions.



### Kneeling Hip Flexor Stretch

Kneel on the right knee, the left leg is forward with the knee bent. Place hands on the floor at each side of the left foot. Keep your back straight and hips and shoulders square. Stretch forward feeling the stretch in the right thigh and hip flexor. Repeat on opposite side.



## On Ice Dynamic Stretches

### Shoulder Flexion

Holding the stick with both hands in front of their body, the player lifts their arms over the head as far as possible without arching their back.

### Shoulder Extension

Holding the stick with both hands behind the back, the player lifts their arms behind the back as high as possible without arching the back.

### Trunk Rotation

Holding the stick at shoulder height with both hands, the player rotates the trunk to one side, returns to the middle and stops, then rotates to the opposite side. DO NOT rotate from side to side without stopping in the middle.

### Groin/Thigh

While gliding on the ice, similar to position for kneeling hip flexor stretch, the left leg is forward with knee bent over the skate. Keep back straight with hips and shoulders square. Keep right leg straight with inside of skate gliding on the ice. Press forward and down, bending the left knee, stretching the right groin and thigh. Stretch should be dynamic but not “bouncy”. Hold stretch for 10-15 seconds and repeat 2-4 times. Repeat stretch for opposite leg.



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References: Hockey Canada Safety Program — [www.canterburyhockey.ca/riskandsafety](http://www.canterburyhockey.ca/riskandsafety) (injury prevention)

The Stretching Institute — <http://www.thestretchinghandbook.com/archives/stretches-hockey.php>

Twist, Peter. *Complete Conditioning for Hockey*. Human Kinetics. 2007

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