



Tips & Tricks

*Welcome to Walk Run Race (powered by Studio SWEAT on Demand).
We provide the training workout, tips and you put in the time!*

Stretch

An ending stretch is the recommended way to conclude each of your Walk Run Race training segments. In exercise physiology, they reference planes of motion. We live most of our lives in the “sagittal plane” so our bodies are used to moving in this plane and stretching is encouraged but not necessary. However, when you are training for a race and moving with intensity in this plane of motion there are several key stretches that can minimize any delayed onset muscle soreness (DOM) you may feel, improve your performance, and minimize injury:

- Cooldown (lower the heart rate)
- Head to toe stretch
- Focus on calf, hamstring, quadriceps as well as front of the shoulder, back of the shoulder and chest

Flexibility Tips

(recently featured in ACE Fitness Trainer Tips)

Tip #1: Work on strength as well as flexibility. As the strength of your muscles improves, especially at the end ranges of motion, so will your flexibility.

Variety of Stretches

There's 100's of muscles in the body and it's not uncommon for one muscle group to be made up of two, three or more smaller muscles. And they're all somewhat inter-connected to each other.

Tight hamstrings can cause lower back problems; tight hip muscles can lead to knee pain; and tight chest muscles can cause upper back pain.

If you're trying to improve the flexibility of your hamstrings for example, then you need to be doing as many different hamstring stretches that you can think of. You need to do hamstrings stretches with your leg out in front, and with your leg out to the side. You need to do hamstring

stretches with a bent knee, and with a straight knee. You need to stretch with both legs at the same time, and you need to stretch one leg at a time. You need to vary the position of your hips, and you need to vary the position of your feet. And if you really want to improve the flexibility of your hamstrings, you need to stretch your lower back, your buttocks, your hips, your groin, and your calves.

Tip #2: Don't do the same old boring stretches all the time; include a variety of stretches for all your muscle groups. Check out some free stretching videos at www.thestretchinghandbook.com for some examples of different stretches.

When to Stretch

Stretching before exercise or as part of your [warm-up](#) is great, but pre-exercise stretching is not meant to improve your flexibility; its purpose is simply to prepare you for exercise. So if you want to improve your range of motion, when is the best time to stretch? One of the best times to stretch is after your work out, as part of your [cool-down](#). This is when your muscles are most warm and pliable, which makes it much easier to stretch and reach new levels of flexibility. Another great time to stretch is just before going to bed. This works at a neuromuscular level, as the increased muscle length is the last thing your nervous system remembers before going to sleep.

Tip #3: Do most of your flexibility training at the end of your work-outs as part of your cool-down, or late in the evening. This will help to improve your flexibility on a more permanent or longer lasting basis.

Types of Stretching

There are many different types of stretching (or ways to stretch), and all of them have their advantages and disadvantages. Some are more suitable for warming up; some are better for injury rehabilitation; while others are great for athletic improvement.

Dynamic stretching, for example, is great for warming up and assisting athletes involved in sports that require fast ballistic type movements. But dynamic stretching is not the best choice for improving flexibility. So which types of stretching are best for improving range of motion?

Static stretching is by far the best form of stretching for improving your flexibility and range of motion. In particular; long hold static stretching (held for longer than 30 seconds) and PNF stretching.

Static stretches are stretching exercises that are performed without movement. In other words, you get into the stretch position and hold the stretch for a specific amount of time.

Tip #4: Long hold static stretching and [PNF Stretching](#) are the most effective forms of stretching for improving your flexibility quickly and permanently.