

Basic Stretches for Runners

Find an upright pole or wall that will support you for leaning into on some stretches. You will start at the top of your body and work your way down.

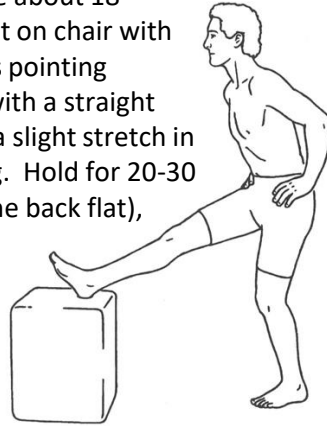
Stretching Tips: Never bounce while stretching because you can tear or pull the muscle you are trying to stretch. Also avoid stretching too quickly, as the muscle will respond with a strong contraction and increase tension. Stretch slowly, and hold the stretch for a minimum of 15 to 30 seconds. **Remember, only stretch once your muscles are warm either after a thorough warm up or after your run.**

Head Circles: Start with your ear near your shoulder on one side, rotate your head around to the front, ending with your ear near the shoulder on the other side. Roll your head back to the other side. Repeat 5-10 times.

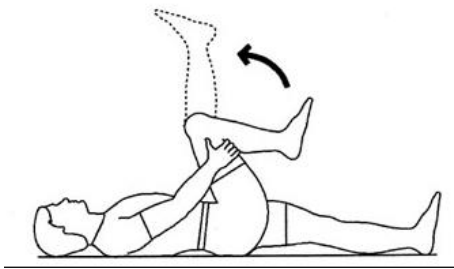
Quadricep Stretch: Stand erect, holding onto a wall for support. Bend your knee behind you so that you can grasp your foot, holding your heel against your buttocks. Stand up straight and push your knee gently back as far as you can, the hand just keeps the heel in place. (For some, it is more comfortable to use the hand from the opposite side). Hold for 20-30 seconds, then switch legs.



Hamstring Stretch #2: Stand erect near a chair or table about 18" high. Place one foot on chair with heel down and toes pointing up. Lean forward with a straight back until you feel a slight stretch in the back of your leg. Hold for 20-30 seconds (keeping the back flat), then switch legs.



Hamstring Stretch #1: Lie down with one leg straight up in the air, the other bent with foot flat on the ground. Loop a towel (if you have one) over the arch of the lifted foot, and gently pull on the towel as you push against it with your foot. Push only to the point when your muscles contract. Hold for 20-30 seconds, then switch legs.



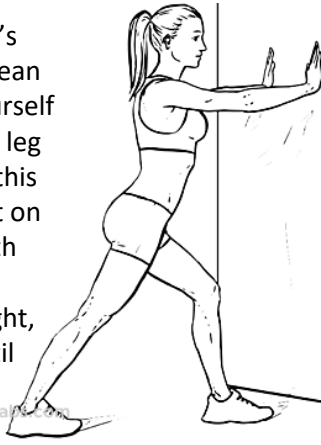
Iliotibial band stretch. Place the leg you want to stretch behind the other one. Keep the foot on the floor and push your hips out to the other side with your elbow until a stretch is felt in the outer hip of the leg you are wanting to stretch. You may also feel a stretch down the outside of the thigh. Hold 20-30 seconds. Relax. Repeat with other leg.



Adductor Stretch. Sit with the soles of your feet together and bring your feet towards your groin. Hold onto your ankles and push your knee toward the ground with your elbows. Keep your back straight and upright. Hold for 15-25 seconds. Relax, repeat.



Calf Stretch: Stand an arm's length from a wall/post. Lean into wall/post, bracing yourself with your arms. Place one leg forward with knee bent – this leg will have no weight put on it. Keep other leg back with knee straight and heel down. Keeping back straight, move hips toward wall until you feel a stretch. Hold 20-30 seconds. Relax. Repeat with other leg.



Kneeling Hip Flexor Stretch: From a kneeling position, bring the left foot forward making sure that the right knee is directly over the right ankle and the right hip is bent to about 90 degrees. Place both hands gently on the left thigh to help maintain a straight, tall spine. Pull your shoulder blades down and back without arching your back. Lean forward into your left hip while keeping your left knee pressed into the ground. Do not allow your pelvis to tip forward or your back to arch. Hold the stretch position for 15-30 seconds at a time. Then switch legs.

