

Maintaining Flexibility Fitness as we get older

What is happening? As we get older, our soft tissues undergo structural changes that decrease the load they can tolerate before sustaining an injury, and physiological changes that impact the ability to heal. **Without conscious intervention**, our soft tissues shorten and stiffen, negatively impacting our function. Changes in flexibility of the ankle for example, may decrease athletic performance and increase fall risk.



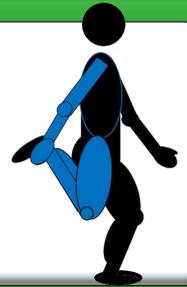
Avoid static stretching before training or competing



Dynamic stretching **can improve** your athletic performance



Warm muscles **stretch better** than cold muscles, so warm-up first!



How to improve! To **improve** your flexibility, stretch daily for 10-min. To **maintain** your flexibility, stretch 2-3 days per week. Use stretches targeting the major muscle groups such as the calf stretch for ankle flexibility, the quadriceps stretch (shown above) for hip and knee flexibility, and postural stretches such as lying on a foam roller with arms out, to improve your shoulder range of motion and ability to stand tall.

Progression? Try dynamic stretching, as seen on the reverse of this page, as a pre-exercise warm-up. Motions similar to your sport activity are best. Save static stretching for after your work-out and non-competition days.

Hold static stretches at the point of **mild discomfort only**, sustain for **30-60 sec**, for a **total of 90 sec per muscle**, and stretch consistently to maintain flexibility gains.

Don't underestimate the benefits of regular stretching!

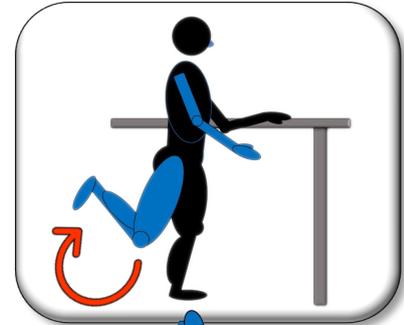
Flexibility Fitness Training for Athletes 50+

BEGINNER EXERCISE

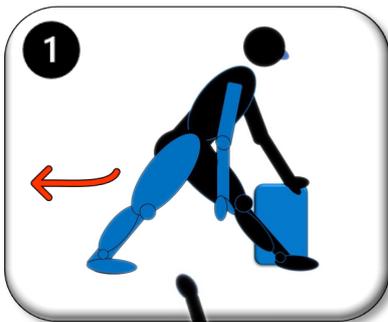


Holding on for safety, alternate bringing the knee to the chest followed by a 'buttocks kick'

Repeat x 5 sets for each leg

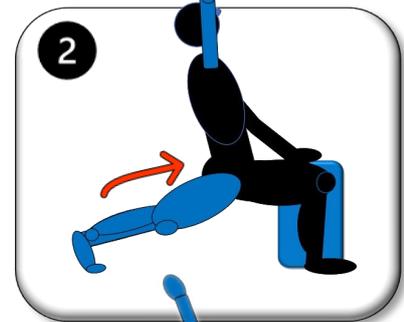


INTERMEDIATE EXERCISE

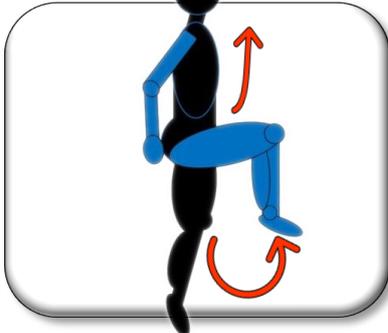


Take a big step backwards with one leg, then alternate lunging forward and rocking back between positions 1 and 2

Repeat x 5 sets for each leg

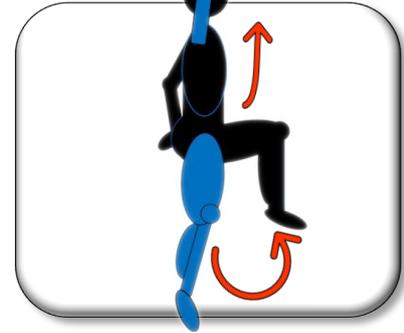


ADVANCED EXERCISE



Alternate lifting one arm and the opposite leg to the ceiling while doing a small, controlled jump

Repeat x 5 sets for each leg



The exercises above can be combined to form a dynamic warm-up

- Do if standing close to a wall or railing, holding on if needed
- **Caution** if you have vertigo, dizziness, or joint pain
- **Stop** if there is more than mild discomfort with any exercise