Stretching It to the Limit
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- Stretching can decrease pain and soreness after exercise
- Range of motion of a joint is increased by a daily 15-30 second stretch of involved muscles
- Stretching is relaxing
- Stretching maintains a balance in body mechanics

Guidelines for stretching

- Warm up (raise the core body temperature) before stretching
- Stretch until there is slight pull, but no pain – hold until the muscle relaxes
- Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation (PNF) stretching has the greatest increases in range of motion
- Static, or held stretches increase range of motion
- Ballistic (bouncing) stretches increase risk of injury because the muscle may contract reflexively if restretched quickly following a short relaxation period

Standing Series - the “two-fer”

A great stretch to do while winding down class. Complete the sequence on one side, repeat on the other.

Calf/shoulder: lunge, straight knee, heel down; arm pressed across chest
Achilles/tricep: close lunge, bend knee, heel down; tricep press over head
Hip flexor/Bicep: raise heel, hip forward; extend arm to side, thumb to rear
Hip flexor/Bicep: bend knee and lower; hands to small of back, elbows back
Hamstring/spine: sit back, bend knee, flex foot; round back, arch back, release foot to floor
IT band: cross one foot behind other, reach sideways toward back foot, hand to inside knee

Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation (PNF)

With a partner, contract the muscle for 15-30 seconds (to overcome the stretch reflex), relax and allow partner to push the stretch.

Hamstring: Standing, partner hold leg at point of stretch, press against partner, contracting hamstrings. Hold 15-30 seconds. In/exhale, relax hamstrings and partner raises leg up. Repeat from new position.
**Hamstring/low back** - From a sit-reach position, press back against partner 15-30 seconds. In/exhale and lean forward while partner pushes on low back.

**Shoulders** - From a shoulder reach position, press elbows against partner’s hands 15-30 seconds. In/exhale, relax, partner presses into shoulder stretch.

**On the Floor for More**

Lying down Crossover
- Quads
- Hamstrings
- Glutes

Sitting
- Hamstring hurdle - 3 positions
- Straddle - forward lean, sideward lean
- Inner thigh
- Deep hip
- Obliques
- Lateral spine
- Sit/reach
- Calves
- Shins
- Upper back/triceps/biceps/chest

Prone
- Abdominals/Upper back
- Hip
- Cat/cow
- Child’s pose
- Corpse