

# Cool Down and Stretch

Directly after cardio activities and once again after functional strength activities you should cool down and stretch.

Cooling down is simply greatly lowering the intensity of the exercise rather than stopping suddenly. This should be continued for about two minutes and will give your body an opportunity to reset the internal environment of the body and at the correct pace.

Following cardio a complete set of stretches should be performed including legs, back, groin, shoulders and chest.

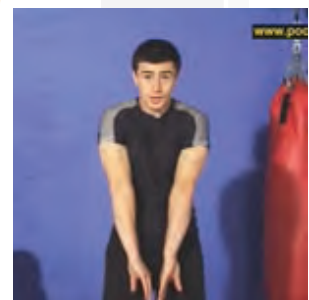
Each stretch will require a forty five second stable and still hold. This will encourage the muscles to rest at an appropriate length without excessive tension or knotting.

Following functional strength work two minutes of very low intensity cardio or movement followed by a complete set of stretches will help to reset the internal environment of the body.

The forearms chest, back and shoulders especially suffer from the nature of modern living as well as the hip flexors and hamstrings. So here at the end of the session the full list is essential everytime.

Your programme has been set at a challenging level - you must meet that intensity with equal efforts in this brief recovery period if you are to benefit from the programme without slowly damaging your body.

The physiology and anatomy behind cooling down and stretching is a very interesting subject.



## Stretching

Stretching is an essential element to training. Achieving real results means working hard, regularly challenging the limits of your body. An equal effort must be given to its recovery and maintenance.

All exercise is a stressor to the body and the body reacts in many ways, one of which is the increase in tension in the tissues.

Most peoples lifestyles will also contribute to conditions of unbalanced tension in the body.

During a warm up you will perform dynamic stretching either instead of or as well as static stretching.

Dynamic stretching means using gentle functional movements such as swinging the legs up, squatting or twisting at the waist gently progressing the range of movement. This sort of stretching should never be explosive.

Static stretching can be performed before, between and after exercise. Static stretching is a technique that involves holding a muscle at length for 45 seconds and can be effective for resetting the resting length of that muscle.

This kind of stretch should never be bounced on and should be performed only from a stable position.

You may see a section in your program entitled SMR. This is another form of flexibility training that is used to compliment stretching. In this case clicking on SMR will launch the required information.

# Cool Down and Stretch

When we talk about stretching, people naturally assume that it is the muscle that is being stretched. We are not actually talking about stretching the muscles. Instead we are talking about stretching the tendinous rubber-like sheath that contains the muscles. Also there are organs inside the muscle that dictate the length and tension of the muscle and it is these organs also that we are trying to reset.

Muscle itself is virtually jelly like without the tendinous sheath and its controlling elements are directly wired to the nervous system, so stretching itself can be said to have very little to do with the muscle tissue itself but rather the nervous system and the muscle sheath.

A stretch should never be painful. There should be a subtle sensation of the muscle being close to the limit of its comfortable length. The stretch should be pleasantly felt and not at all painful though you may feel stiffness. Following a short cool down, static stretching should be performed.

