

STRETCHES FOR WEIGHT TRAINING

By Bob Anderson

Drawings by Jean Anderson

Bob Anderson, author of *Stretching*, has designed this stretching program for weight training. The stretches should be done before and after working out and can also be done between sets, while you are resting.

The Two Phases of Stretching

The easy stretch: Stretch to where you feel a slight, easy tension. Hold this for 5-30 seconds, and as you do, the tension should diminish. If not, ease off a bit until it feels comfortable. This easy stretch gets the tissues ready for the developmental stretch.

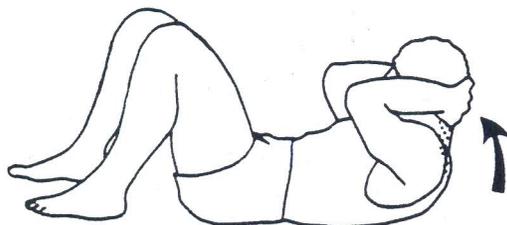
The developmental stretch: After holding the easy stretch, move a fraction of an inch farther

into the stretch until you feel the slight tension again. This is the developmental stretch and should be held for 5-30 seconds. This is an excellent way to increase flexibility and get the muscles ready for a workout.

Basic Stretching Rules:

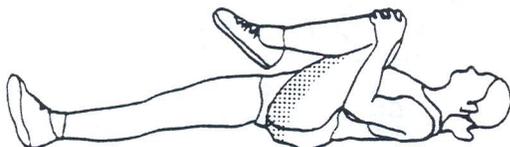
- Stretch slowly and with control.
- No bouncing.
- No pain.
- Don't compare your flexibility with others.
- The key is to *relax*.
- Breathing should be slow, rhythmical. Don't hold breath.
- Hold only stretch tensions that *feel* good.

1



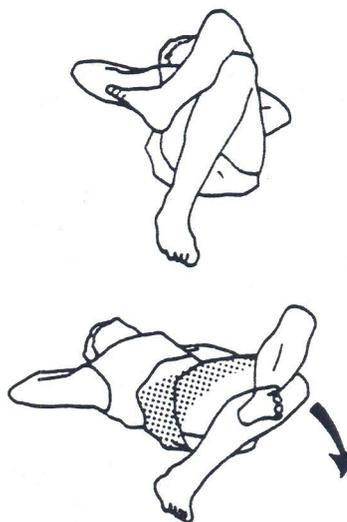
Bring knees together and rest feet on floor. Interlace fingers behind head and rest arms on the mat. Using the power of your arms, *slowly* bring head, neck, and shoulders forward until you feel a slight stretch. Hold easy stretch for 5 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

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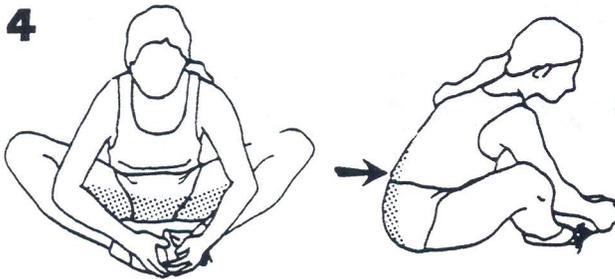


Next, straighten both legs and relax, then pull left leg toward your chest. Keep back of head on the mat, if possible, but don't strain. Hold an easy stretch for 30 seconds. Repeat, pulling right leg toward chest.

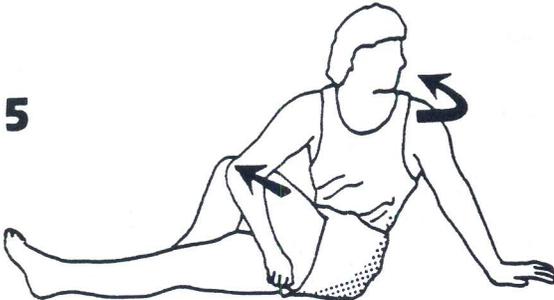
3



From bent knee position, interlace fingers behind head and lift left leg over right leg. Use left leg to pull right leg toward floor until you feel a stretch along the side of your hip and lower back. Stretch and relax. Keep upper back, shoulders, and elbows flat on floor. You don't have to touch the floor with your right knee, just stretch within *your* limits. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat stretch for other side.



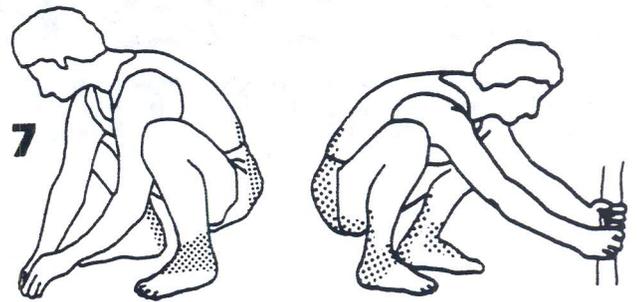
Put soles of feet together with heels a comfortable distance from groin. Now, put hands around feet and slowly pull yourself forward until you feel an easy stretch in the groin. Bend forward from hips and not from shoulders. If possible, keep elbows on outside of lower legs for stability. Hold comfortable stretch for 30-40 seconds.



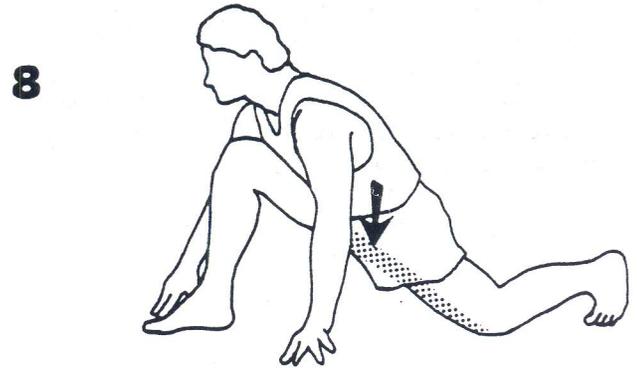
Sit with right leg straight. Put left foot outside of right knee, with left knee bent. Bend right elbow and rest it on outside of upper left thigh, just above knee. During the stretch use elbow to keep this leg stationary with controlled pressure to the inside. Now, with left hand resting behind you, slowly turn head to look over left shoulder, and at the same time rotate upper body toward left hand and arm. As you turn upper body, think of turning hips in the same direction (though hips won't move). This should stretch lower back and side of hip. Hold for 15 seconds. Do both sides.



Next, straighten right leg. The sole of left foot will be resting next to inside of straightened leg. Lean slightly forward from hips and stretch hamstrings of right leg. Find an easy stretch and relax. If you can't touch your toes comfortably, use a towel to help. Hold for 50 seconds. Do not lock your knee. Right quadricep should be soft and relaxed. Keep right foot upright with ankle and toes relaxed.



With feet shoulder width apart and pointed out at about 15° angle, heels on ground, bend knees and squat down. If you have trouble staying in this position hold onto something for support. A great stretch for ankles, Achilles tendons, groin, lower back and hips. Hold for 30 seconds. *Be careful if you have had any knee problems. If pain is present, stop.*

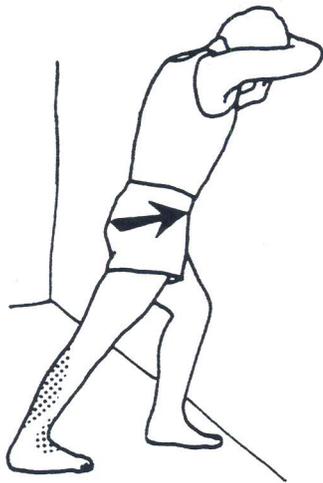


Move one leg forward until knee of forward leg is directly over ankle. Other knee is resting on floor. Now, without changing the position of knee on floor or forward foot, lower front of hip downward to create an easy stretch. This stretch should be felt in front of hip and possibly in hamstrings and groin. This helps relieve tension in lower back. Hold for 30 seconds. Do both legs.



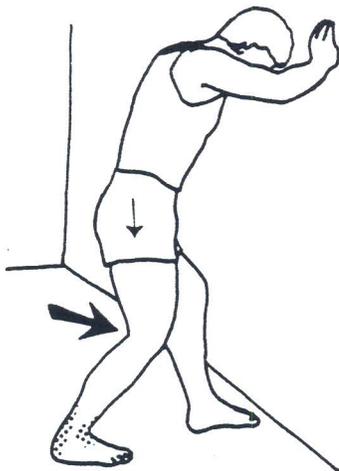
Opposite hand to opposite foot—quad and knee stretch. Hold top of left foot (from inside of foot) with right hand and gently pull, heel moving toward buttocks. Knee bends at natural angle and creates a good stretch in knee and quadriceps. Pulling opposite hand to opposite foot does not create any adverse angles in the knee and is especially good for knee rehab and problem knees. Hold for 30 seconds. Do both legs.

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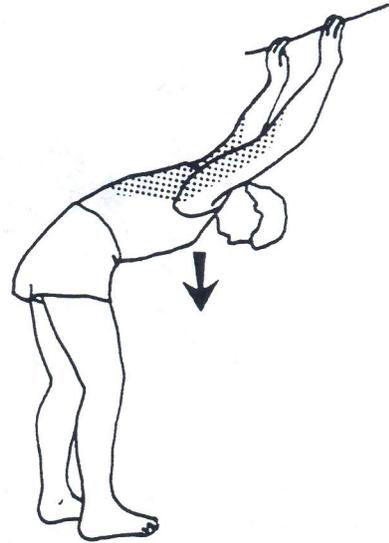
To stretch calf, stand a little way back from a solid support and lean on it with forearms, head resting on hands. Bend one leg and place foot on ground in front of you, leaving other leg straight. Slowly move hips forward until you feel a stretch in calf of straight leg. Be sure to keep heel of foot on ground and *toes pointed straight ahead*. Hold easy stretch for 30 seconds. Do not bounce. Stretch both legs.

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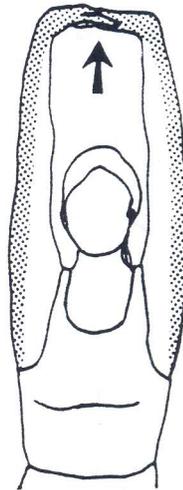
To stretch the soleus and Achilles tendon, slightly bend back knee, keeping foot flat. This gives a much lower stretch—also good for maintaining or regaining flexibility. Hold for 15 seconds, each leg.

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Place both hands shoulder width apart on fence or ledge and let upper body drop down as you keep knees slightly bent (1 inch). Hips should be directly above feet. To change the area of the stretch, bend knees just a bit more and/or place hands at different heights. Find a stretch that you can hold for at least 30 seconds. This will take some of the kinks out of a tired upper back. The top of the refrigerator or a file cabinet are good to use for this stretch. (*Remember to always bend knees when coming out of this stretch.*)

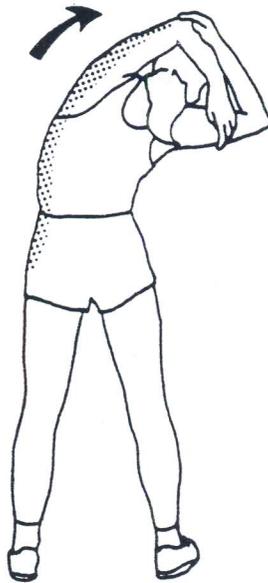
13



In standing or sitting position, interlace fingers above head. Now, with palms facing upward, push arms slightly back and up. Feel the stretch in arms, shoulders, and upper back. Hold for 15 seconds. Do not hold breath. Good to do anywhere, anytime. Excellent for slumping shoulders.

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The next stretch is done with fingers interlaced behind back. Slowly turn elbows inward while straightening arms. An excellent stretch for shoulders and arms. Good to do when you find yourself slumping forward from your shoulders. Hold for 5-15 seconds. Do twice.

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With arms overhead, hold elbow of one arm with other hand. Keeping knees slightly bent (1 inch), gently pull elbow behind head as you bend from hips to side. Hold easy stretch for 10 seconds. Do both sides. Keeping knees slightly bent will give you better balance.