



## **Lower Body Stretching Guide**

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### **Why Stretch?**

Muscles and joints that are too tight and restricted frequently cause muscle strains and tendonitis. By stretching the muscles you can help reduce the risk of these and other injuries as well as increase your over-all performance. In addition to maximizing your performance, a consistent stretch program provides the following:

- Injury prevention
- Improve range of motion
- Improve circulation to the muscles
- Improve performance

### **Technique:**

A thorough warm-up and stretching routine can be completed in less than 10 minutes. Because a warm muscle will stretch further than a cold muscle, it is always best to do a quick warm-up. Jogging a few laps around the parking lot or even doing some jumping jacks will work great.

Because muscles will be warmest after a practice, greater gains in flexibility will be achieved by stretching at that time.

**The following stretches should be performed by holding the stretch for each target muscle for 3 seconds, relaxing that muscle, then repeating the stretch for a total of 10 repetitions on each side.**

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### **Foot: Plantar Fascia**

While on all fours, place your toes flat on the ground underneath. Push back with your arms until you feel the stretch in your feet.



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### **Ankle**

Sit with your left leg straight. Bend your right leg and cross your right foot over and rest it to the outside of your left knee. Grab your right foot with your left hand to move the ankle. In addition, to circular motions of the ankle, be sure to point and flex the foot. Repeat the stretch on the other ankle.



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### **Lower Leg & Calves**

From a pushup position, place your right foot over your left heel. Your weight should be on the ball of your left foot. Push your left foot down flat to the ground, keeping your left leg straight. You should feel a stretch in your calf and ankle. Repeat the stretch on the other leg.

To isolate different muscles with this stretch add a bend into your knee. Bending your knee will shift the focus of the stretch onto the soleus muscle and the achilles tendon.



### Upper Leg: Quads & Patellar Tendon

Gently pull the heel of your foot backwards until it touches your buttocks. Keep your head up and maintain an upright body position. Your knee should point towards the ground. To stretch other quad muscles with this stretch add some inward and outward rotation to the leg. Repeat the stretch on the other leg.



### Inner Thigh: Adductors

Lunge slowly to the right, keeping your toes pointed straight ahead and feet flat. Squat by sitting back and down onto your right leg, keeping your left leg straight. Maintain your weight on the right foot's mid-foot to heel. Keep your head up and maintain an upright body position. Feel this stretch inside of your left thigh. Repeat the stretch on the other leg.



### Pelvis: Hip Flexors & Iliopsoas

With your feet together, step forward and squat into a lunge position. Keep your head up and maintain an upright body position. You should feel this stretch in the open hip and even up into the abdomen as well. Repeat the stretch on the other leg.

**\*Lean the upper torso away from the open hip.**



### Posterior Upper Thigh: Hamstrings

While standing up straight, cross one leg over the other. Keep your low back flat and bend over hinging at the hips until you feel the pulling in your rear leg. It's important to keep your back flat in this stretch. The best way to ensure this is to really emphasize sticking your buttocks out. Repeat the stretch on the other leg.



### Upper & Lower Back: Erector Spinae, Latissimus Dorsi & Trapezius

Sit with your right leg straight. Bend your left leg, cross your left foot over and rest it to the outside of your right knee. Bend your right elbow and rest it on the outside of your upper left thigh. With your left arm behind you, rotate your upper body toward your left arm and hand. Use your right elbow to add a push to the left knee to further the stretch. You should feel a stretch in your lower back and possibly the outside of your left leg. Repeat the stretch on the other leg.



### Outer Thigh: Iliotibial Band (ITB)

Stand upright and cross your right leg behind your left. Put your weight on your right leg and slightly lean forward and to the left while pushing your right hip to outwards. Your left foot should be parallel to your right. You should feel the stretch in your right hip and down the outside of your thigh. Repeat the stretch on the other leg.





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**Glutes: Gluteus Maximus & Piriformis**

While lying on your back, bring your knees to your chest and cross your left leg over your right, placing your left ankle and foot on your right knee. Reach under your right thigh and pull towards the chest. You should feel this stretch in your gluteal region. Repeat the stretch on the other leg.



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**Glutes: Gluteus Maximus & Piriformis**

While on your hands and knees, bend the left knee forward and then cross the left leg in front of the right leg. Put your weight on your left leg as you straighten the right leg behind you. Square your hips toward the floor. Repeat the stretch on the other leg.



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**Glutes: Gluteus Maximus & Piriformis**

While lying on your back, grasp your left thigh with your left hand and bring your left knee towards the opposite armpit. Grasp your lower leg with your right hand and pivot your lower leg across your body and towards the ground. Feel this stretch deep into the buttocks. Repeat the stretch on the other leg.

