



STRETCHING BASICS:

Stretching is the deliberate lengthening of muscles in order to increase muscle flexibility and joint range of motion. Stretching activities are an important part of any exercise or rehabilitation program. They help warm the body up prior to activity thus decreasing the risk of injury as well as muscle soreness.

The benefits of stretching are many and have been proven through various studies over time. Stretching benefits people of all ages, and is intended for the young as well as the elderly population.

THE BENEFITS OF STRETCHING (COURTESY: MAYO CLINIC):

- **Increased flexibility and joint range of motion:** Flexible muscles can improve your daily performance. Tasks such as lifting packages, bending to tie your shoes or hurrying to catch a bus become easier and less tiring. Flexibility tends to diminish as you get older, but you can regain and maintain it.
- **Improved circulation:** Stretching increases blood flow to your muscles. Blood flowing to your muscles brings nourishment and gets rid of waste byproducts in the muscle tissue. Improved circulation can help shorten your recovery time if you've had any muscle injuries.
- **Better posture:** Frequent stretching can help keep your muscles from getting tight, allowing you to maintain proper posture. Good posture can minimize discomfort and keep aches and pains at a minimum.
- **Stress relief:** Stretching relaxes tight, tense muscles that often accompany stress.
- **Enhanced coordination:** Maintaining the full range-of-motion through your joints keeps you in better balance. Coordination and balance will help keep you mobile and less prone to injury from falls, especially as you get older.

PROPER STRETCHING TECHNIQUE

- It is essential to practice proper stretching techniques. Please ask your PT for more information.

BENEFITING FROM PHYSICAL THERAPY:

Physical therapy is a traditional treatment methodology aimed at the treatment and curing of certain ailments, and preventing the chances of reoccurrence of the same at a later point of time. Its primary aim is to bring back the patients to his/her normal self, free of any pain or sufferings, so that he/she could then onwards lead a normal life by performing all the daily activities with minimal or no difficulty.



For physical therapy to be effective, it is important that the patient also responds positively to the treatment, and for that to happen he/she needs to be in a positive frame of mind and not in a saddened or dull mindset. Hence, these days, physical therapy also includes efforts to motivate the patient to make sure that he/she indeed remains in a positive mindset all through out the session. Finally, for receiving the full benefits of physical therapy, it is important that the patient follows the instructions of the PT religiously for maximum effectiveness.

Q AND A: WHAT IS A "FROLLER"?



Foam rollers, sometimes called 'frollers', come in several different shapes and sizes. The most common is the 36" long, 6" round format. Other variations on shape and size include the half roll, which is a vertical half and therefore flat on one side, and the short roll which is half the length of the typical roll. The half roll is often used for less advanced exercises with the person gradually progressing to use the full roll.

The most common purpose of the foam roll in exercise prescription is likely for the massage-like effects it can produce. This technique is often referred to as 'self-myofascial release' or SMR. To produce the effects of massage you usually use the foam roll in conjunction with your own body weight by lying on the foam roll with the affected muscles directly on top of the roll. By slowly rolling over the target area of the affected body part you are essentially massaging the muscle. Foam rollers are inexpensive and can be very effective tools in reducing pain due to muscle imbalances and tightens as well as in improving flexibility and core strength. Simply rolling over the tender areas in your muscles for a few minutes a day is a great way to increase and maintain your musculoskeletal health. When used in a proper exercise regimen they can help improve your sports performance as well.