Stretching Guide for Football

Physical Therapy in San Jose, Los Gatos, Foster City and Burlingame: Football Stretches

Stretching is an essential part of playing Football. A good stretching routine can help to minimize muscle imbalances, prevent injury and improve your performance on the field. The following stretching program is designed for Football players who do not have any current injuries or individual stretching needs. If you have an injury, or a specific mechanical imbalance that may be holding back your performance, your MORE Physical Therapy Physical Therapist can design a stretching program just for you.

When is the Best Time to Stretch?

When your muscles are warm and relaxed! If you take your performance seriously, stretch after you have done a general body warm up of about 5-10 minutes (light running or light whole body drills including cutting drills) and after your training or game. You should continue to stretch throughout practice if there are times when your muscles may be cooling down, such as between drills. Be sure to continue stretching during a game when you are standing on the sideline and not being active due to a long defensive or offensive rush. Football is a dynamic sport so you'll need both dynamic and static stretching. Dynamic stretches form part of your pre-game or training warm-up. Static stretches can be included at the end of your cool down or at other times to improve your overall flexibility.

Rules for Dynamic Stretching:

- Warm up your muscles first, then stretch while your muscles are still warm.
- Move through your range of movement, keeping control of the movement with your muscles. Do not allow momentum to control the movement by "flinging" or "throwing" your body parts around.

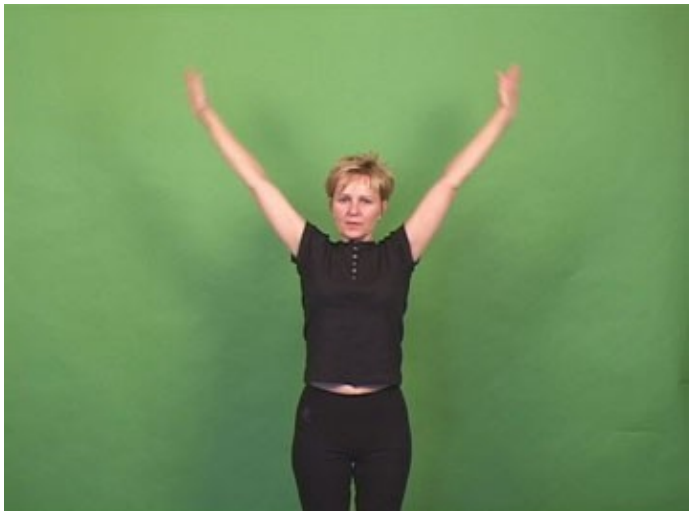
- You may feel light resistance in your muscles, but you should never feel pain during a stretch.
- Start with slow, low intensity movements, and gradually progress to full-speed, Football-like movements.

Rules for Static Stretching:

- Warm up the muscles first.
- Slowly take your muscles to the end of their range. You will feel slight resistance in the muscle, but you should never feel pain during a stretch.
- Hold the stretch in a static position. Do not bounce.
- Hold each stretch for at least 20 seconds; longer is better. Repeat each stretch 3-4 times.

Dynamic Stretches:

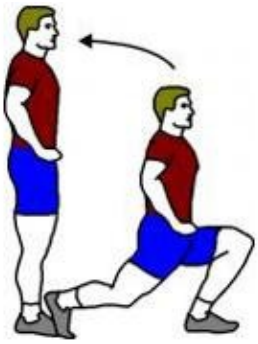
Arm Circles



Leg Swings Forward and Back

Leg Swings Sideways

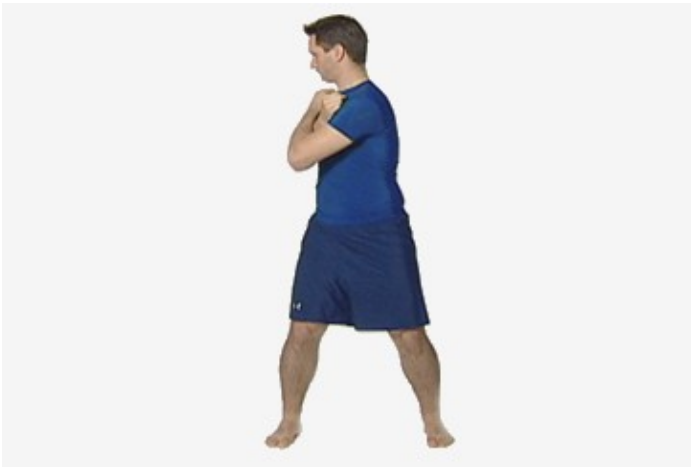
Lunges



Leg Curls

Static Stretches:

Back Rotation Stretch:



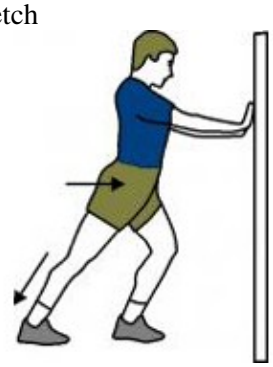
Neck and Trapezius

Lower back stretch

Hamstring stretch

Quadriceps stretch

Hip Flexor Stretch

Groin Stretch

Calf Stretch