

BASIC STRETCHES FOR SOCCER

Stretching should be part of everyone's conditioning program. Flexibility, along with stretching muscles before playing and exercising helps reduce the risk of injury. Stretching after warming up the muscles (jog around the field) is always best, but with children who have been moving around most of their day, it is less critical to require a warm-up.

Stretching is best done slowly, without "bouncing", and should be held at least 10 - 15 seconds for children, and 20 - 30 seconds for adults. The stretches mentioned on this sheet need only be done once, and do not have to be repeated multiple times. There are many stretches which are good to do, but these are the easiest to do for the main muscles which will be used during the game of soccer.



The quadriceps are the muscles of the front of the thigh, and are the main muscles for running and kicking. The easiest stretch is to grab your ankle and gently pull your leg backwards, feeling the stretch in the front of the thigh. Hold for 10 - 30 seconds. Switch legs.

The other stretch is the Lunge, which also stretches the front of the thigh. Place left leg in front and the right leg straight behind you. Lean forward. You should feel the stretch in the front of the leg. Hold for 10 - 30 seconds. Repeat with the left leg.



The hamstrings are the muscles in the back of the thigh. Along with the calf muscles, they also help with running and kicking. The easiest stretch is to stand and cross one leg in front of the other, then slowly bend forward and attempt to touch your toes. Hold for 10 - 30 seconds. Repeat with the other leg.

You may sit on the ground with one leg bent and the other out straight in front of you. Reach forward to touch your toes. Hold for 10 - 30 seconds, then repeat with the other leg.

