FITNESS

Flexibility

Flexibility is very important at any age regardless of your fitness regimen. Flexibility is the range of motion of a joint or series of joints. Incorporating flexibility into your daily routine will enhance personal performance, improve daily activities, better prepare your body for physical activity and decrease your risk of injury.

Benefits of Flexibility

1. **Improved Physical Performance**
   Stretching leads to increased flexibility, which can make many daily tasks such as lifting, bending, turning and other repetitive movements much easier and less fatiguing to perform.

2. **Improved Circulation**
   Stretching increases the temperature of the muscle tissue. This increases the circulation to that area, bringing with it nutrients that help keep muscle tissue healthy and permit greater transport of lactic acid out of the tissues.

3. **Improved Posture**
   Bad posture can lead to many frustrating aches and pains. Short, frequent stretches throughout the day can help keep muscles from getting tight, allowing proper posture to be maintained and avoiding discomfort.

Guidelines for Stretching

1. Focus on large muscle groups (abdominal and back muscles, arms, legs, shoulders and chest)
2. Stretching should be done everyday to keep the body from becoming stiff.
3. Each stretch should be held in position (static) for 10 – 30 seconds, with each stretch being performed three to five times. Never bounce while stretching.
4. Warm-up before stretching. Cold muscles are tight and stiff. A slow five minute walk will provide adequate warm-up allowing you to stretch easier.
5. Don't strain the muscles while stretching. Only stretch as far as your muscle will allow you to stretch comfortably. You should only feel a slight pull.
6. Stretch before and after any fitness regimen.

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