

Preparing for a 5K

2nd Article in a series of 4

Dan Munton M.D., Sports Medicine specialist at Texas Sport & Spine, located at 4545 Hartford Street, Abilene, TX.

Now that you have started training for your first 5K, you need to be aware of how important stretching is in your weekly routine. Stretching is crucial in the maintenance of your flexibility and later on in life, mobility. Stretching may also improve athletic performance, reduce muscle soreness, and prevent injuries. However stretching exercises done incorrectly may actually cause injury rather than prevent it.

Guidelines for stretching include

- 1.) Never bounce as you may risk tearing a muscle
- 2.) Never hold your breath
- 3.) Stretch until you feel a mild pulling sensation
- 4.) Stretch slowly avoiding muscle contraction
- 5.) Perform 1 set of 4 repetitions
- 6.) Hold each stretch for 30 seconds

Here are 10 stretching exercises :

- 1.) Hamstring Stretch
Stand with heel propped on low table, knee straight
Gently and slowly lean forward at waist
- 2.) Adductor Stretch
Stand with feet apart almost as far as possible
Shift hips to left and hold, Shift hips to right and hold
- 3.) Piriformis Stretch
Lie on back, knee bent
Move left ankle over right knee
Gently lift right knee up to chest until stretch is felt
Repeat with other leg
- 4.) Tibialis Anterior Stretch
Stand facing wall, hands on wall
Place top of right foot down, toes pointed
Slowly lower body until stretch is felt in front of foot
Repeat with other leg
- 5.) Gastroc Stretch
Stand facing wall, hands on wall

Step forward with foot of right leg, leaning hips toward wall
Keep rear leg straight with heel on floor
Repeat with other leg

6.) Soleus Stretch

Same position as in #5 however bend rear leg keeping heel on floor

7.) Groin Stretch

Sit with knees bent, soles of feet together
Slowly let your knees drop to the floor
Grasp ankles with hands and lean forward from hips

8.) IT Band Stretch

Stand next to wall, about a foot away, involved leg toward wall
Cross over the right leg in front and lean hip into wall
Repeat with other leg

9.) Hip Flexor Stretch

Kneel on one leg, other leg almost straight behind you
Lean forward slowly keeping hips and back straight
Repeat with other leg

10.) Quad Stretch

Stand on left leg, using table or chair for balance
Bend knee of right leg
Grasp with hand and gently pull up toward buttocks
Repeat with other leg

Remember how important stretching is. It reduces the chance of injury and increases mobility. Not only is it important before and after exercise, the benefits enhance all activity as part of a healthy lifestyle.

How to stay motivated?

“It happens to the best of us: no matter how many great running days we have, there will be a handful when our most difficult steps are the ones out the door.” From kicksports.com

Here are a few ways to stay motivated.

- 1.) Make running part of your daily routine – consistency - possibly same time every day.
- 2.) Mix up your route
- 3.) Cross Train
- 4.) Get a running buddy – man, woman or dog
- 5.) Have Fun – make it a game with yourself or someone else

This week's running schedule is as follows:

Monday: Rest

Tuesday: 2.5 miles

Wednesday: Rest or Easy Run

Thursday: 2.5 miles

Friday: Rest

Saturday: Cross Train

Sunday: 40 minute Run

See you at the Movin' at Midnight walk/run – registration on Sept 3, 2011 starting at 11:00 p.m. the run will be at 12:01 a.m. on Sept. 4, 2011.

**Registration Forms at TX Sport & Spine, www.txsportspine.com;
www.doxjox.com and www.abilenerunners.com**