

Stretching: Focus on flexibility

You can stretch anytime, anywhere. Just follow these tips to do it safely and effectively.

[By Mayo Clinic Staff](#)

Stretching may take a back seat to your exercise routine. The main concern is exercising, not stretching, right?

Not so fast. Stretching may help you:

- Improve your joint range of motion

- Improve your athletic performance

- Decrease your risk of injury

Understand why stretching can help and how to stretch correctly.

Benefits of stretching

Studies about the benefits of stretching have had mixed results. Some show that stretching helps. Other studies show that stretching before or after exercise has little to no benefit.

Some research shows that stretching doesn't reduce muscle soreness after exercise,

Consider skipping stretching before an intense activity, such as sprinting or track and field activities. Some research suggests that pre-event stretching may actually

Know when to exercise caution

You might need to approach stretching with caution if you have a history of injury or a medical condition that affects your muscles or joints.