The Big Book of STRETCH ROUTINES

Over 150 different stretching routines, with each routine targeting a specific muscle group or a specific injury.

BRAD WALKER
Exercise Scientist and Sports Trainer
The Big Book of Stretch Routines

Over 150 different stretching routines, with each routine targeting a specific muscle group or a specific injury.

Free version includes 10 routines only

Full version available here
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Getting Started

I remember the day I saw one of my clients struggling to put together a stretching routine. Sure she had all the stretches right there in front of her, but... Which stretch should she do first? Which one next? How many stretches? It was all too overwhelming!

I realized at that moment I could help her by creating the routines for her. And then all she had to do was pick a routine and follow along.

So here they are: Over 150 different stretching routines that you can choose from. And I’ve broken them down into routines for major muscle groups and routines for sports injuries. So it’s as simple as picking the routine that’s right for you and then just following along.

My routines are a little different

One of the first things you’ll notice about my routines is that they’re a little different from what you’re probably expecting: In what way? They only take 10 minutes to complete.

Over the past 25 years I’ve lost count of how many thousands of routines I’ve designed for athletes, injury sufferers and health care professionals. And one thing I learnt early on was that including too many stretches in a routine did one of two things.

Either, the client would rush through the routine. Or they wouldn’t finish it.

I’m sure you know what I’m talking about: You’re looking at a routine that contains 10 or 12 or 15 stretches and you’re thinking... “Even if I just do each stretch twice and spend only 30 seconds doing each one (remember most stretches need to be done on the right side and the left side) it’s going to take me forever. I just don’t have half an hour to roll around on the floor.”

So that’s why I include only 3 stretches in each routine. It gives you a much better opportunity to focus on each stretch; hold each stretch for longer (which is really important); target a specific area instead of trying to cover everything; and be done in about 10 minutes.
How to choose the routines that are right for you

As I mentioned earlier, all the routines have been broken down into routines for major muscle groups and routines for sports injuries. So the hardest job you face is simply choosing the routine that’s right for you. How do you do that?

Firstly, ask yourself if you have, or have had an injury that is still causing you problems. If so, start with one of the stretching routines for injuries. You can view the injury list in the contents to find the routines for your specific injury.

A word of caution!
The routines for sports injuries have been designed for injury prevention and/or injury rehabilitation. However, they are not useful (and can even be dangerous) if used during the inflammation phase of an injury, which is typically the first 48 to 72 hours after an injury occurs. This phase can also be identified by increased swelling (or inflammation) around the injury site.

During this phase of the rehabilitation process NO STRETCHING should be used! Stretching during this early stage of the rehabilitation process may cause more damage to the injured tissues.

Avoid stretching during the first 72 hours, or if swelling is still present at the injury site. Use other rehabilitation techniques like rest, ice, compression, heat, massage, ultra-sound, etc. before starting any of the following stretching routines for injuries.

If you don’t have an injury, then start with one of the routines for a muscle group. It’s not important where you start, but as a general rule; if it’s not tight and it’s not causing you any problems, you don’t need to stretch it. There are a few exceptions to this (such as athletes that require increased flexibility for their chosen sport), but for most people this is a wise rule to follow. So if you perform a stretch and you don’t feel any tension in the target muscle group, this would indicate that you’re not tight in that area.

As you start to notice which muscle groups are tight and which ones aren’t, aim to work on the muscle groups that are most tight.

For example, if you notice that your hamstring muscles are tight compared to your quadriceps, work on your hamstring muscles until you have a good level of flexibility in both.
How to stretch properly

Before starting any of the routines, take a minute to review the picture and read the description of how to perform the stretch.

You’ll notice that all the pictures in the routines show the “hold” position of the stretch. So start the routine by slowly moving into the hold position of the first stretch. Once in the hold position it’s important to **maintain each stretch for 60 seconds** (each side).

Once the 60 seconds is up, slowly come out of the stretch position and then slowly move into the next stretch (or the same stretch on the other side of your body). Once you’ve completed all 3 stretches, repeat the routine a second time.

It’s important that the intensity of the stretch remains light and relaxed. In other words, don’t push the stretch too hard.

To begin with, aim for light tension in the target muscle group. If you feel any pain or severe discomfort, you’re pushing the stretch too hard. Back off and reduce the intensity of the stretch until you feel a gentle pull or light tension in the target muscle group.

As your flexibility improves you can gradual increase the intensity of the stretch: But never to the point of pain or severe discomfort.

💡 **Here’s a tip:** Relax and focus on breathing deeply while doing the stretches. Many people unconsciously hold their breath while stretching. This causes tension in the muscles, which in turn makes it difficult to stretch. To avoid this, remember to breathe slowly and deeply during all stretching exercises. This helps to relax the muscles, promotes blood flow and increases the delivery of oxygen and nutrients to the muscles.

For more detailed information on how to stretch properly and how to get the most out of your stretching, grab a copy of the *Ultimate Guide to Stretching & Flexibility*.

💡 **Here’s another tip:** Cut out all coffee, soda and energy drinks. These drinks are disastrous for your health and especially your flexibility. They affect your nervous system, brain activity and interrupt sleep patterns. They have a dehydrating affect on your body, and not-to-mention, they are highly addictive. If you want to improve your flexibility (and your health), remove them from your diet completely.
My Top 10 All-Time Favorite Stretching Routines

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Stretching Routines for Muscle Groups

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Neck Stretching Routine #2

**Stretch 1 – Rotating Neck Stretch:** Stand upright while keeping your shoulders still and your head up, then slowly rotate your chin towards your shoulder.

![Image of Rotating Neck Stretch](image1.jpg)

**Stretch 2 – Diagonal Flexion Neck Stretch:** Stand upright and let your chin fall forward towards your chest. Then gently lean your head to one side.

![Image of Diagonal Flexion Neck Stretch](image2.jpg)

**Stretch 3 – Sitting Neck Flexion Stretch:** While sitting on a chair, cross your arms and hold onto the chair between your legs. Let your head fall forward and then lean backwards.

![Image of Sitting Neck Flexion Stretch](image3.jpg)
Shoulders Stretching Routine #1

**Stretch 1 – Parallel Arm Shoulder Stretch:** Stand upright and place one arm across your body. Keep your arm parallel to the ground and pull your elbow towards your body.

**Stretch 2 – Reaching-up Shoulder Stretch:** Place one hand behind your back and then reach up between your shoulder blades.

**Stretch 3 – Reverse Shoulder Stretch:** Stand upright and clasp your hands together behind your back. Keep your arms straight and slowly lift your hands upward.
Chest Stretching Routine #1

**Stretch 1 – Above Head Chest Stretch:**
Stand upright and interlock your fingers. Bend your arms and place them above your head while forcing your elbows and hands backwards.

**Stretch 2 – Parallel Arm Chest Stretch:**
Stand with your arm extended to the rear and parallel to the ground. Hold on to an immovable object and then turn your shoulders and body away from your outstretched arm.

**Stretch 3 – Assisted Reverse Chest Stretch:**
Stand upright with your back towards a table or bench and place your hands on the edge of the table or bench. Bend your arms and slowly lower your entire body.
Upper Back Stretching Routine #4

**Stretch 1 – Sitting Neck Flexion Stretch:**
While sitting on a chair, cross your arms and hold onto the chair between your legs. Let your head fall forward and then lean backwards.

**Stretch 2 – Reach Forward Upper Back Stretch:**
Stand with your arms out in front and your hands crossed over, then push your hands forward as far as possible and let your head fall forward.

**Stretch 3 – Reaching Lateral Side Stretch:**
Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, then slowly bend to the side and reach over the top of your head with your hand. Do not bend forward.
Lower Back Stretching Routine #1

**Stretch 1 – Lying Knee Roll-over Stretch:**
While lying on your back, bend your knees and let them fall to one side. Keep your arms out to the side and let your back and hips rotate with your knees.

**Stretch 2 – Sitting Knee-up Rotation Stretch:**
Sit with one leg straight and the other leg crossed over your knee. Turn your shoulders and put your arm onto your raised knee to help rotate your shoulders and back.

**Stretch 3 – Sitting Bent-over Back Stretch:**
Sit on the ground with your legs straight out in front or at 45 degrees apart. Keep your toes pointing upwards and rest your arms by your side or on your lap. Relax your back and neck and let your head and chest fall forward.
Hips Stretching Routine #3

**Stretch 1 – Lying Cross-over Knee Pull-down Stretch:** Lie on your back and cross one leg over the other. Bring your foot up to your opposite knee and with your opposite arm pull your raised knee down towards the ground.

**Stretch 2 – Sitting Cross-legged Reach Forward Stretch:** Sit with your legs crossed and your knees out, and then gently reach forward.

**Stretch 3 – Sitting Rotational Hip Stretch:** Sit with one leg crossed and your other leg behind your buttocks then lean your whole body towards the leg that is behind your buttocks.
Buttocks Stretching Routine #1

Stretch 1 – Sitting Knee-to-chest

Buttocks Stretch: Sit with one leg straight and the other leg crossed over your knee. Pull the raised knee towards your opposite shoulder while keeping your back straight and your shoulders facing forward.

Stretch 2 – Lying Cross-over Knee Pull-up Stretch: Lie on your back and cross one leg over the other. Bring your foot up to your opposite knee and with your opposite arm pull your raised knee up towards your chest.

Stretch 3 – Lying Knee-to-chest Stretch: Lie on your back and keep one leg flat on the ground. Use your hands to bring your other knee into your chest.
Quadriceps Stretching Routine #2

**Stretch 1 – Standing Quad Stretch:** Stand upright while balancing on one leg. Pull your other foot up behind your buttocks and keep your knees together while pushing your hips forward. Hold on to something for balance if needed.

**Stretch 2 – Kneeling Quad Stretch:** Kneel on one foot and the other knee. If needed, hold on to something to keep your balance and then push your hips forward.

**Stretch 3 – Lying Side Quad Stretch:** Lie on your side and pull your top leg behind your buttocks. Keep your knees together and push your hips forward.
Hamstrings Stretching Routine #1

Stretch 1 – Standing Toe-down Hamstring Stretch: Stand with one knee bent and the other leg straight out in front. Point your toes towards the ground and lean forward. Keep your back straight and rest your hands on your bent knee.

Stretch 2 – Standing Leg-up Hamstring Stretch: Stand upright and raise one leg on to an object. Keep that leg straight and point your toes upwards. Keep your back straight and lean your upper body forward.

Stretch 3 – Standing Leg-up Bent Knee Hamstring Stretch: Stand with one foot raised onto a chair or an object. Bend your knee and let your heel drop off the edge of the object. Keep your back straight and move your chest towards your raised knee.
Adductors (Groin) Stretching Routine #1

Stretch 1 – Sitting Feet-together Adductor Stretch: Sit with the soles of your feet together and bring your feet towards your groin. Hold onto your ankles and push your knees toward the ground with your elbows. Keep your back straight.

Stretch 2 – Sitting Wide-leg Adductor Stretch: Sit on the ground with your legs straight out and as wide apart as possible and then reach forward while keeping your back straight.

Stretch 3 – Standing Wide-leg Adductor Stretch: Start by standing with your feet wide apart and your toes pointing forward. Then lean forward and reach towards the ground.
Stretching Routines for Injuries

Not included in the free version

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