



Lower Body Stretching Guide

Dr. Keith Schreffler, Schreffler Chiropractic (www.schrefflerchiropractic.com)
Dr. Steven Dowell, Ashburn Sport & Spine (www.ashburnchiro.com)
Krista Heubusch, TNT Inline Skating Coach & Skater's Quest (www.skatersquest.com)

Why Stretch?

Muscle strains and tendonitis are frequently caused by muscles and joints that are too tight and restricted. By stretching the muscles you can help reduce the risk of these and other injuries as well as increase your over-all performance. In addition to maximizing your performance, a consistent stretch program provides the following:

- Injury prevention
- Improve range of motion
- Improve circulation to the muscles
- Improve posture

Technique:

A thorough warm-up and stretching routine can be completed in less than 10 minutes. Because a warm muscle will stretch further than a cold muscle, it is always best to do a quick warm-up. Jogging a few laps around the parking lot or even doing some jumping jacks will work great.

Because muscles will be warmest after a practice, greater gains in flexibility will be achieved by stretching at that time.

The following stretches should be performed by holding the stretch for each target muscle for 2 seconds, relaxing that muscle, then repeating for a total of 10 repetitions on each side:

Ankle

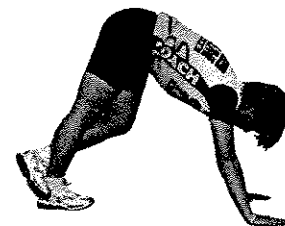
Sit with your left leg straight. Bend your right leg and cross your right foot over and rest it to the outside of your left knee. Grab your right foot with your left hand to manipulate that ankle. Repeat and add additional movements putting the ankle through multiple ranges of motion. Be sure that that you point and flex the toes as well as moving the ankle in a circular fashion.



Lower Leg & Calves: Achilles Tendon & Gastroc, Soleus

From a pushup position, place your left foot over your right heel. Your weight should be on the ball of your right foot. Push your right foot down flat to the ground, keeping your right leg straight in the process. You should feel a stretch in your calf and ankle.

Repeat, however, this time add a bend into your knee. Bending your knee will shift the focus of the stretch onto the soleus muscle and the achilles tendon.



Upper Leg: Quads & Patellar Tendon

Gently pull the heel of your foot backwards until it touches your buttocks. Keep your head up and maintain an upright body position. Your knee should point towards the ground. You can get a more thorough stretch of the quad muscles by adding some inwards and outwards rotation to the leg.



Inner Thigh: Adductors

Step out to the right, keeping your toes pointed straight ahead and feet flat. Squat by sitting back and down onto your right leg, keeping your left leg straight and the weight on the right foot's mid-foot to heel. Keep your head up and maintain an upright body position. Feel this stretch in the inside of your thigh.



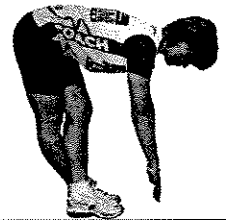
Pelvis: Hip Flexors & Iliopsoas

With your feet together, step forward into a lunge position. Keep your head up and maintain an upright body position. Feel this stretch at the point where your hip flexes. You may even feel this stretch up into the abdomen as well.



Posterior Upper Thigh: Hamstrings

Stand up straight and cross one leg over the other. While keeping your low back flat, bend over until you feel the pulling in your rear leg. It's important to keep your back flat in this stretch. The best way to ensure this is to really emphasize sticking your buttocks out.



Upper & Lower Back: Erector Spinae, Latissimus Dorsi & Trapezius

Sit with your left leg straight. Bend your right leg, cross your right foot over and rest it to the outside of your left knee. Bend your left elbow and rest it on the outside of your upper right thigh. With your right arm behind you, rotate your upper body toward your right arm and hand. Use your left elbow to add a push to the right knee to further the stretch. You should feel a stretch in your lower back and possibly the outside of your right leg.



Outer Thigh: Iliotibial Band (ITB)

Stand upright and cross your left leg behind your right. Put your weight on your left leg and lean into the right side by pushing your left hip away. Be sure that your left foot is parallel to your right. You should feel the stretch in your hip and down the IT Band.



Glutes: Gluteus Maximus & Piriformis

Cross your right leg over your left, placing your ankle/foot past your knee. Flex your left leg at the thigh, bringing both your legs upward towards your chest. Reach under your left thigh and pull towards the chest. You should feel this stretch in your glute region.

