

Cycling Stretches

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Note: If you have had any recent surgery, muscle or joint problem, please consult your personal health care professional before starting a stretching or exercise program.

Stretching should be done before and after activity or whenever you feel like it.

How to Stretch:

Stretching should be done slowly without bouncing. Stretch to where you feel a slight, easy stretch. Hold this feeling for 5-30 seconds. As you hold this stretch, the feeling of tension should diminish. If it doesn't, just ease off slightly into a more comfortable stretch. The easy stretch reduces tension and readies the tissues for the developmental stretch.

After holding the easy stretch move a fraction of an inch farther into the stretch until you feel mild tension again. This is the developmental stretch which should be held for 5-30 seconds. This feeling of stretch tension should also slightly diminish or stay the same. If the tension

increases or becomes painful, you are overstretching. Ease off a bit to a comfortable stretch. The developmental stretch reduces tension and will safely increase flexibility.

Hold only stretch tensions that feel good to you. The key to stretching is to be relaxed while you concentrate on the area being stretched. Your breathing should be slow, deep and rhythmical. Don't worry about how far you can stretch. Stretch relaxed and limberness will become just one of the many by-products of regular stretching.

Do a light warm-up of walking or jogging for several minutes prior to stretching.

The dotted areas are those areas of the body where you will most likely feel the stretch.

Before:

1



To stretch your calf, stand a little ways from a solid support and lean on it with your forearms, your head resting on your hands. Bend one leg and place your foot on the ground in front of you leaving the other leg straight, behind you. Slowly move your hips forward until you feel a stretch in the calf of your straight leg. Be sure to keep the heel of the foot of the straight leg on the ground and your toes pointed straight ahead. Hold an easy stretch for 20 seconds. Do not bounce. Stretch both legs.

To stretch the soleus and Achilles tendon area, slightly bend the back knee, keeping the foot flat. This gives you a much lower stretch which is also good for maintaining or regaining ankle flexibility. 10 seconds, each leg. This area needs only a slight feeling of stretch. Stretch both legs

2

3



To stretch the upper hamstrings and hip, hold onto the outside of your ankle with one hand, with your other hand and forearm around your bent knee. Gently pull the leg as one unit toward your chest until you feel an easy stretch in the back of the upper leg. You may want to do this stretch while you rest your back against something for support. Hold for 15-30 seconds. Make sure the leg is pulled as one unit so that stress is not felt in the knee.

4



Sit with your right leg bent, with your right heel just to the outside of your right hip. The left leg is bent and the sole of your left foot is next to the inside of your upper right leg. (Try not to let your right foot flare out to the side in this position.) Now slowly lean straight back until you feel an easy stretch in your right quadriceps. Use hands for balance and support. Hold an easy stretch for 30 seconds. Do not hold any stretches that are painful to the knee.

5



After stretching your quads, sit with your right leg bent, right heel just to the outside of your right hip. Practice tightening the buttocks on the side of the bent (right) leg as you turn the hip over. This will help stretch the front of your hip and give a better overall stretch to upper thigh area. After contracting the butt muscles for 5-8 seconds, let the buttock relax. Then continue to stretch quads by slowly leaning back (stretch#4) for another 15 seconds.

6



Next, straighten your right leg. The sole of your left foot will be resting next to the inside of your straightened leg. Lean slightly forward from the hips and stretch the hamstrings of your right leg. Find an easy stretch and relax. If you can't touch your toes comfortably, use a towel to help you stretch. Hold for 30 seconds. Do not lock your knee. Your right quadriceps should be soft and relaxed during the stretch. Keep your right foot upright with the ankle and toes relaxed.

Repeat stretches 7, 3, 4, 5, 6 for other leg

8



Put the soles of your feet together with your heels a comfortable distance from your groin. With your hands around your feet slowly contract your abdominals to assist you in flexing forward until you feel an easy stretch in the groin. Make your movement forward by bending from the hips and not from the shoulders. If possible, keep your elbows on the outside of your lower legs for greater stability during the stretch. Hold a comfortable stretch for 20-30 seconds.

9



With your right leg straight put your left foot flat on the ground on the other side of your right knee. Reach over your left leg with your right arm so that your elbow is on the outside of your left leg. With your left hand resting on the ground behind you, slowly turn your head to look over your left shoulder, and at the same time, turn your upper body (but not your hips) toward left hand and arm. Be sure to bend your right elbow and to gently push it against your bent leg; this will help create and stabilize the stretch. Hold for 5-15 seconds for each side. Stretches the outside of your upper leg and lower back.

10



Stretch diagonally. Point the toes of your left foot as you extend your right arm. Stretch as far as is comfortable. Hold 5 seconds, then relax. Repeat, stretching the right leg and the left arm.

11



Interlace your fingers behind your head and rest your arms on the mat. Using the power of your arms, slowly bring your head, neck and shoulders forward until you feel a slight stretch. Hold an easy stretch for 5 seconds. Repeat three times. Do not overstretch.

12



Next, straighten both legs and relax, then pull your left leg toward your chest. For this stretch keep the back of your head on the mat, if possible, but don't strain. Hold an easy stretch for 30 seconds. Repeat, pulling your right leg toward your chest.

13



Bend your leg and, with your opposite hand, pull that bent leg up and over your other leg as shown above. Turn your head to look toward the hand of the arm that is straight (head should be resting on the floor). Make sure the back of your shoulders are kept flat on the floor. Now, using your hand on your thigh (resting just above the knee), pull your bent leg down toward the floor until you get the right stretch feeling in your lower back and side of hip. Keep feet and ankles relaxed. Hold a comfortable stretch for 30 seconds, each side.

Repeat stretch 8 14

15



Interlace your fingers above your head. Now, with your palms facing upward, push your arms slightly back and up. Feel the stretch in arms, shoulders and upper back. Hold stretch for 15 seconds. Do not hold your breath. This stretch is good to do anywhere, anytime.

16



Hold onto your bike in front of you. With your hands shoulder-width apart on this support, relax, keeping your arms straight and your chest moving downward, and your feet remaining directly under your hips. Keep your knees slightly bent (*). Hold this stretch 30 seconds. This is a good stretch to do anywhere, at anytime. (Remember to always bend your knees when coming out of this stretch.)

After:

1



To stretch your calf, stand a little ways from your bike and lean on it. Bend one leg and place your foot on the ground in front of you leaving the other leg straight, behind you. Slowly move your hips forward until you feel a stretch in the calf of your straight leg. Be sure to keep the heel of the foot of the straight leg on the ground and your toes pointed straight ahead. Hold an easy stretch for 20 seconds. Do not bounce. Stretch both legs.

2



Opposite hand to opposite foot/ quads and knee stretch: Hold top of *left* foot (from inside of foot) with *right* hand and gently pull, heel moving toward buttocks. (You may also do this stretch with left hand to left foot.) Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat for right leg.

3



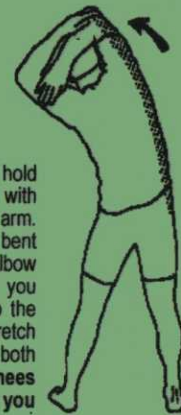
With your feet shoulder width apart and pointed out to about a 15° angle, heels on the ground, bend your knees and squat down. If you have trouble staying in this position hold onto something for support. It is a great stretch for your ankles, Achilles tendon areas, groin, lower back and hips. Hold stretch for 20-30 seconds. **Be careful if you have had any knee problems. If pain is present discontinue this stretch.**

4



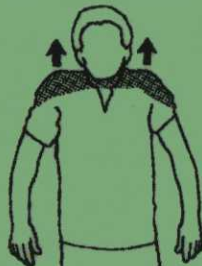
Standing with knees slightly bent, place the palms of your hands on your lower back just above your hips, fingers pointing downward. Gently push your hands forward to create an extension in the lower back. Hold comfortable pressure for 10-12 seconds. Repeat twice.

5



With arms overhead, hold the elbow of one arm with the hand of the other arm. Keeping knees slightly bent (1"), gently pull your elbow behind your head as you bend from your hips to the side. Hold an easy stretch for 10 seconds. Do both sides. **Keeping your knees slightly bent will give you better balance.**

6



Shoulder Shrug: Raise the tops of your shoulders toward your ears until you feel slight tension in your neck and shoulders. Hold this feeling of tension for 3-5 seconds, then relax your shoulders downward into their normal position. Do this 2-3 times. Good to use at the first signs of tightness or tension in the shoulder and neck area.

7



As shown in the drawing above, move one leg forward until the knee of the forward leg is directly over the ankle. Your other knee should be resting on the floor. Now without changing the position of the knee on the floor or the forward foot, lower the front of your hip downward to create an easy stretch. This stretch should be felt in front of the hip and possibly in your hamstrings and groin. This will help relieve tension in the lower back. Hold the stretch for 20-30 seconds. Repeat for other leg.

8



With legs bent under you, reach forward with one arm and grab the end of a mat, carpet or anything you can hold onto. If you can't grab onto something just pull back with your arm straight while pressing down slightly with your hand. (Do likewise pulling on end of mat.) Hold stretch for 20 seconds. Stretch each side. Don't strain. You should feel the stretch in your shoulder, arms, sides, upper back, or even in your lower back.

9



Repeat stretch **11** **10**
Before

Relax with your knees bent and the soles of your feet together. This comfortable position will stretch your groin. Hold this stretch for 30 seconds. If necessary, place a small pillow under your neck and head for comfort.

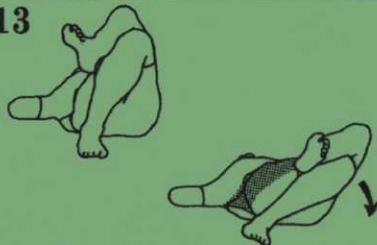
11



Repeat stretch **12** **12**
Before

Shoulder Blade Pinch: From a bent knee position pull your shoulder blades together to create tension in the upper back area. (As you do this your chest should move upward.) Hold this controlled tension for 4-5 seconds, then relax and gently pull your head forward as shown in stretch #11, BEFORE. This will help release tension and allow the neck to be stretched effectively.

13



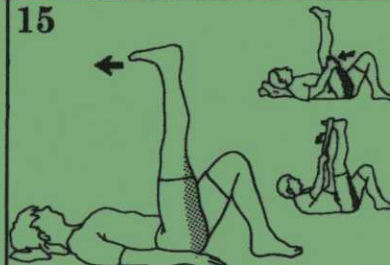
From a bent-knee position, interlace your fingers behind your head and lift the left leg over the right leg. From here, use your left leg to pull your right leg toward the floor until you feel a good stretch. Stretch and relax. Keep the upper back, shoulders, and elbows flat on the floor. The idea is not to touch the floor with your right knee, but to stretch within your limits. Hold for 20-30 seconds. Repeat stretch for other side.

14



Straighten out your arms and legs. Point your fingers and toes as you stretch as far as you can. Stretch and then relax. This is a good stretch for the entire body. Hold for 5 seconds.

15



Lie on your back, lift your leg up toward a 90° angle at the thigh joint. Keep the low back flat against the floor during the stretch. Hold stretch for 15-20 seconds. Repeat for other leg. If necessary, hold onto the back of your leg to create the stretch, as shown above. Or put a towel around the bottom of your foot and pull gently. You can also place a pillow under your head for comfort. Do not overstretch.



With your thumbs, massage up and down the longitudinal arch of your foot. Use circular motion with a good amount of pressure to loosen tissues. Do both feet. Always massage your feet for 2-3 minutes before and after activity or after sitting or standing for long periods of time. This will reduce unwanted tension and keep the feet and legs feeling good.



Elevate your feet. It is great for circulation and revitalization of tired legs and mind. Your lower back should be flat and not arched or off the floor. Do not elevate your feet for too long in the beginning, gradually increase the time (1-5 minutes, or longer).

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Bob and Jean Anderson, creators of this stretching chart are also the authors of the book, STRETCHING. Now a revised ©2010 edition, available spiral bound.