



The Importance Of Stretching

February
2019

The Importance Of Stretching!

We used to believe that stretching was necessary to warm up the muscles and prepare them for activity. However, research has shown that stretching the muscles before they're warmed up can hurt them. When muscles are cold, the fibers aren't prepared and may be cause damage. If you exercise first, you'll get blood flow to the area and that makes the tissue more pliable and amenable to change.

Stretching isn't just for athletes, we all need to stretch in order to protect our mobility and independence. Stretching should be performed daily. It's not enough to build muscle and achieve aerobic fitness. You need to think about flexibility too. Regular stretching keeps muscles long, lean, and flexible, and this means that exertion won't put too much force on the muscle itself.

Why is stretching important?

Stretching keeps the muscles flexible, strong, and healthy and we need that flexibility to maintain a range of motion in the joints. Without it, the muscles shorten and become tight. Then, when you call on the muscles for activity, they are weak and unable to extend all the way. That puts you at risk for joint pain, strains and muscle damage. For example, sitting in a chair all day results in tight hamstrings in the back of the thigh. That can make it harder to extend your leg or straighten your knee all the way, which inhibits walking or running.

Where do you start?

It may have taken you many months to get tight muscles, so you're not going to be perfectly flexible after one or two sessions, it can take weeks to months to get flexible and you'll have to continue working on it to maintain it. The areas critical for mobility are in your lower extremities: your calves, your hamstrings, your hip flexors in the pelvis and quadriceps in the front of the thigh. Stretching your shoulders, neck, and lower back is also beneficial. Aim for a program of daily stretches or at least three or four times per week. Hold a stretch for 30 seconds. Don't bounce, which can cause injury. You'll feel tension during a stretch, but you should not feel pain. If you do, there may be an injury or damage in the tissue. Stop stretching that muscle and talk to your doctor.



Evie's Eats - Chicken & Green Bean Stir-Fry

(serves 4)

Ingredients:

- 200g green beans
- 500g skinless, chicken breasts, cut in strips lengthwise
- 3 tablespoons canola oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 green onions, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger, grated
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Sauce:

- ½ cup good quality chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons Tamari soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- ½ teaspoon of honey
- 1 tablespoon corn-starch



Method:

1. To make sauce, whisk ingredients in small bowl until blended; set aside.
2. Meanwhile, bring a medium saucepan of water to boil over high heat.
3. Add green beans and cook uncovered, 4 minutes, or until tender crisp. Drain and refresh under cold water; set aside.
4. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a wok over high heat. Add chicken and stir-fry until brown about 8 minutes; remove and set aside.
5. Wipe wok with paper towel; add remaining oil and heat until slightly smoking. Add garlic, green onions and ginger; cook about 30 seconds.
6. Stir in sauce. Return chicken to wok and add green beans; stir-fry 3 minutes, or until sauce thickens. Salt and pepper to taste. Enjoy!

Quote of the Month - Believe in yourself. You are braver than you think, more talented than you know, and capable of more than you imagine! – Roy T. Bennett



For more health and training tips, recipes and videos like us on Facebook or follow us on Instagram.



Take control your life, be happy! – rock on!

Till next month... *Evie*