

All it takes is 60 seconds!

Flexibility Training



Fighting Heart Disease & Stroke

What is Flexibility Training?

- Flexibility describes the ability of a joint and surrounding muscles to move through a specific range of motion with ease and without pain.
- Flexibility training improves our muscles' ability to be supple and stretchy, and improves our efficiency in completing activities of daily living such as bending, reaching, lifting and turning.
- Flexibility varies between individuals as a result of both genetic and lifestyle factors. The good news is we are all capable of increasing our flexibility if we put some time into stretching.

Why do Flexibility Training?

- Relieves muscle tightness and stiffness
- Improves circulation
- Reduces risk of injury
- Improves postural and muscular imbalances
- Enhances aerobic fitness and muscle strength
- Improves mood by releasing muscle tension and facilitating relaxation

How often should you stretch?

Frequency - 2-3 times a week minimum but additional benefits are shown from stretching every day.

Intensity - Stretch to the point of feeling tightness or slight discomfort.

Time - Hold the stretch for 10-30 seconds. Repeat each stretch two to four times, accumulating 60 seconds per stretch.

Type - Try to stretch each major muscle group, paying particular attention to the muscles that feel the tightest.



How to get the most out of your Flexibility Training:

Avoid bouncing or jerking movements. Static stretching (holding the stretch) reduces the risk of overstretching or injuring the muscle.

Take your time! It's tempting to rush through stretches at the end of a workout but try to slow it down and make sure you're getting a full 60 for each main muscle.

To avoid injury, it is important to stretch when your muscles are warm. If you're unable to stretch at the end of a workout session, try stretching after a bath or hot shower.

Do what is comfortable for you. Everyone has different levels of flexibility and there's no right or wrong. Never push yourself to the point of pain! Try to do your stretches in standing or sitting to avoid laying down.

Focus on your breath throughout the stretches and make sure you are not holding your breath. Fill the lungs by inhaling through the nose, expanding the abdomen, followed by a passive exhale.

How to get the most out of your Flexibility Training:

The 'Stretching with Croí' video is a good place to start, and takes you through a range of stretches for many of the major muscle groups:

croi.ie/stretchingathome



For more health information or to support the work at Croí, the Heart & Stroke Charity, please visit our website at **www.croi.ie**.

Croí, the Heart & Stroke Charity

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