

STRETCHING 101: As Easy As A-B-C

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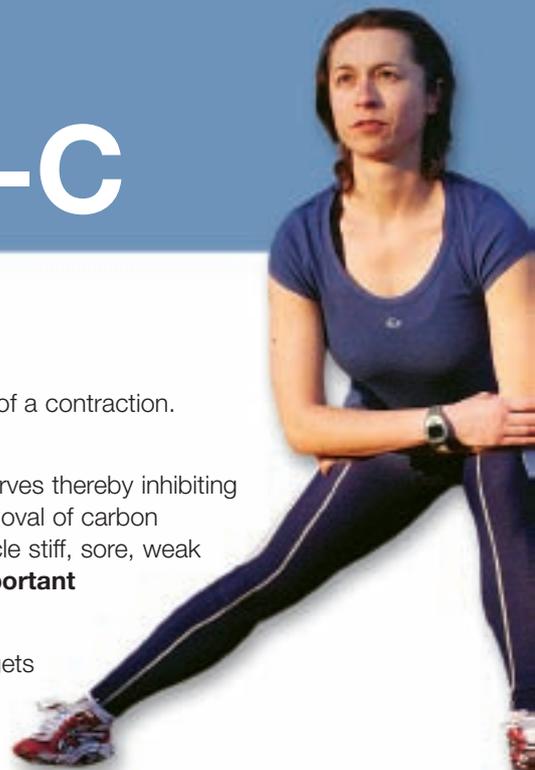
WHAT is the PURPOSE of STRETCHING?

To allow a muscle or muscle group to release tension and/or lengthen – the opposite of a contraction.

WHY should we STRETCH?

A muscle at work (ie: in prolonged contraction) will compress its blood vessels and nerves thereby inhibiting the most effective delivery of oxygen and nutrients (AKA: THE GOOD STUFF) and removal of carbon dioxide, lactic acid and other metabolites (AKA: THE BAD STUFF). This leaves a muscle stiff, sore, weak and/or less effective. **Stretching will encourage the decompression of these important blood vessels and nerves so the muscle will remain nourished.**

Once a muscle is shortened, it doesn't always return to its resting length – instead it gets shorter and shorter and shorter with each exertion. Eventually, the tension in such a muscle can become so much that the muscle may tear or start rubbing on bony bits around it. **Stretching helps allow a muscle return to its resting length.**



A Alignment

Generally, keep your torso square. Limbs and head should remain aligned straight ahead.

B Breathing

Fill your torso with a warming breath. Breathe in on a relaxed 4-count & out on the same. Hold each stretch for 5 breaths (30 sec.)

C Concentrate

Engage your pelvic floor. Visualize the muscle that you are stretching becoming longer and looser.

These principles can be and should be applied to any stretch you have ever learnt. The following are a few that target muscles for the disciplines in triathlon: swimming, cycling and running.

SWIMMING

Pectorals



(chest)

Scalenes



(side of neck)

Lev Scap



(back of neck)

Triceps



(back of arm)

Infraspinatus



(back of shoulder)

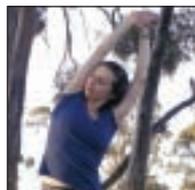
Rhomboids



(between shoulder blades)

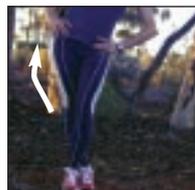
CYCLING

Lats



(side of torso)

IT Band



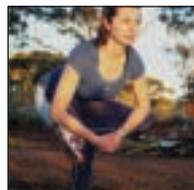
(side of thigh)

Glutes - parallel



(buttocks)

Glutes - turned out



(buttocks)

Quads



(front of thigh)

RUNNING

Gastrocs



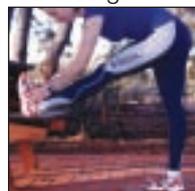
(back of calf)

Soleus



(heel)

Hamstrings



(back of thigh)

Quads



(front of thigh)

Adductors



(inner thigh)

Tib Ant



(front of shin)