

Hockey Injuries

For more information on hockey related injuries visit:
<http://www.cssphysio.com.au/hockeynewsletter.html>



Stretching to Prevent Injury

Regular stretching can improve the overall flexibility of muscles and joints. It is particularly beneficial when performed on muscles:

1. Prone to becoming tight. In hockey, this will be the muscles that are regularly used in a shortened position, such as the quads, hip flexors, groin, and mid back.
2. That require full elongation during sport. This includes the calves, hamstrings, groin, gluts, and lower back.
3. That naturally do a lot of work, by nature of the demands of sport.

The main areas that should be stretched for hockey are shown below. There are some important principles to keep in mind when stretching:

- Muscles will stretch better when warm
- Stretching should be slow and gradual, without bouncing. Go to the point of strain, not pain
- Perform each stretch for 5 x 20-30 seconds. .

There is additional information on stretching included at the end of this document.

1. **Calves:** There are two main calf muscles, and they are stretched differently:

(a) Outer calf (gastrocs). This is stretched with the knee straight.

(b) Deep calf (soleus). This is stretched with the knee bent.



2. **Hamstrings:** There are several variations of this stretch. Be careful not to strain the lower back – try to keep it straight.



3. **Quadriceps:** This muscle group can stretched in standing, or while lying on the side or stomach.



4. **Hip flexors:** there are a few variations of this stretch. Combined stretches with other muscles are often good as they place the muscles in positions required for sport:



- Combined hip flexor and quads stretch
- Combined hip flexor and hamstring stretch.



- Combined hip flexor & hip joint stretch



5. **Groin:** Again, there are many different ways to stretch, and each variation will affect different parts of the groin. The hamstrings and groin muscles are closely related, and some stretches target both areas.



6. **Gluts / hip:** The gluts are an important muscle group – they do a lot more



work in hockey than in many other sports. These stretches target the gluts and other muscles at the back of the hip joints.



It is also good to keep the hips flexible, as hockey requires a lot of twisting through these joints.



7. **Low back:** This needs flexibility in every direction. However be careful doing a lot of forward bending stretches for the back, as the game of hockey does this already. Often it is good to stretch the opposite way as a

compensation for all the bending.

8. Mid back:

(a) This area, called the thoracic spine, is where we perform a lot of our spinal twisting movements. Rotational stretches are particularly important for this region.



(b) Similar to the lower back, the thoracic spine spends a lot of time bent during hockey, and players often develop an over-rounded mid-back posture. It is a good idea to perform regular arching exercises for this part of the spine.



More about stretching

If you are carrying an injury, seek advice before stretching. There are circumstances where stretching may aggravate the injury. For example, you need to be particularly careful with hamstring stretches if you have a back injury or suffer from 'sciatica'.

Some players are prone to developing tightness in other muscles, particularly in the neck, shoulders or forearms. Contact us if you need information on stretches for any other part of the body.

Static stretching before sport is still used extensively, but there is emerging evidence that it may hinder performance when implemented within 30 minutes of competition. It is a valuable addition to a 'cool-down' after sport when the muscles are still warm.

Stretching will be more effective if performed regularly – i.e., 3 or more times per week.

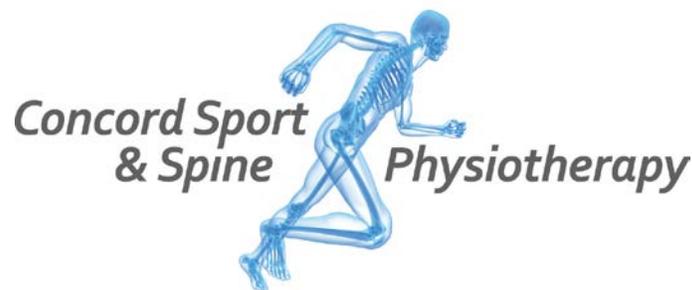
Regular stretching is not for everyone. Those who are naturally stiff, or who have tightness in certain muscles will benefit most. Those who are already very flexible or even 'hypermobile' do not need to spend much time stretching. In some cases this could be harmful.

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For information on all types of injuries visit:

<http://www.cssphysio.com.au/forpatients.html>



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