Stretching the Major Muscle Groups

Shoulders

Doorway Stretch

This stretch target the front portion of the shoulder or the anterior deltoid, as well as stretching the rotator cuff muscles and the muscles of the chest as well.

Lean into a doorway as shown until tension is felt in the desired muscles, then hold this position for 10 to 15 seconds, repeat the stretch 3 times.


Arm Across Chest

This stretch targets the middle and posterior deltoid heads of the shoulder and work to stretch the rotator cuff muscles as well as some of the muscles of the upper back.

Pull your right arm across your chest while using your left arm to create tension in the muscles that are being targeted, go until you feel a resistance the hold this position. Stretch for 10 to 15 seconds and then switch arms and repeat the stretch 3 times each way.


Biceps

Cross Stretch

This stretch targets the muscles of the upper arm as well as the muscles of the forearm. The stretch also allows for stretching of the ligaments and tendons that surround the elbow, making it great for athletes of throwing sports.

To do this stretch you stand up straight and raise your arms up as seen in the picture. By fully straightening the arms you create a tension throughout the muscles of the arm and specifically the biceps. Hold the stretch for 10-15 seconds and repeat 3 times.

**Triceps**

**Behind the Neck Stretch**

This stretch targets the muscles on the back of the upper arm which are the triceps. The stretch also stretches the ligaments and tendons that surround the elbow, so again this is a good stretch for athletes in throwing sports.

To perform the stretch you raise both arms overhead and then bend one arm so the hand is behind the head as seen in the picture. Then you use the opposite hand to pull the elbow towards the midline of the body until you feel a tension in the triceps. Hold this position for 10 to 15 seconds and repeat 3 times for each arm.


**Chest**

**Doorway Stretch** - As seen in the above Shoulder section

**Overhead Chest Stretch**

This stretch targets the muscles of the chest which are the pectoralis major and minor. Because of the overhead position this stretch also helps to stretch out some of the shoulder musculature and upper body muscles as well.

To perform the stretch you start by putting both hands behind your head as seen in the picture. Then to create the tension in the chest you squeeze your shoulder blades and push your elbows back, being sure to keep your arms up high. When you are able to get the desired tension in the chest hold the stretch for 10 to 15 seconds and repeat 3 times.

**Back**

**Prayer Stretch**

This stretch targets the muscles throughout the entire back, specifically stretching the lattisimus dorsi muscle and the erector spinae of the lower back. This is a great stretch for the back and can help with people that experience back pain regularly.

To perform the stretch the person gets into the praying position as seen in the picture, and the more that you stretch the arms out and lean the head in towards the knees the more of a stretch that you will feel. Once you have obtained the desired amount of tension on the muscles of the back hold the stretch for 10 to 15 seconds and repeat 3 times.


**Seal Stretch**

This stretch targets more the muscles in the lower back and is a good stretch for relieving pain in the area.

To perform the stretch you lay on the ground and use your arms to raise the upper body off the ground while keeping the lower body flat, as seen in the picture. Once you obtain the desired stretch in the lower back hold for 10 to 15 seconds and then repeat 3 times.


**Hip and Groin**

**Lunge Stretch**

This stretch targets the muscles that make up the hip flexors, which are a common area of tightness. The stretch will also bring the glutes into play and may also stretch the bottom portion of the calf depending on how far the person is able to stretch.

To perform this stretch you get into a lunging position as seen in the picture above. You then continue to bend the knee and lean forward until the desired stretch in the hip flexors is reached. Hold the stretch for 10 to 15 seconds and repeat 3 times for each side.

Butterfly Stretch

This stretch targets the muscles that are in the groin region and can also provide some stretch for the hip flexors.

To perform this stretch you get into an Indian style seating position as seen in the picture, and pull the feet in as close as possible. By leaning forward at the waist and pushing the legs toward the ground you are able to get a stretch in the muscles of the groin. When the desired stretch is achieved hold the position for 10 to 15 seconds and repeat 3 times.


Quadriceps, Hamstrings, and Calf

Standing Heel to Butt Stretch

This stretch targets the quadriceps muscle group which is made up of four different muscles. This movement also helps in stretching the tendons and ligaments that surround the knee.

To perform the stretch you pull your foot up until the heel is touching your glute or is close as possible, as seen in the picture. Once the desired stretch is achieved hold for 10 to 15 seconds and repeat 3 times for each leg. This stretch can also be done while laying down on your side if it is too difficult to maintain balance while standing.


Hurdler Stretch

This stretch targets the hamstring muscle group which is made up of three different muscles. If the person is flexible enough to reach the toes and pull them towards the body they can also achieve a stretch in the calf, and by leaning forward the lower back experiences stretching as well.

To perform the stretch you sit on the floor and make a figure four with your legs as seen in the picture. The objective is then to lean forward slightly at the waist and try to reach as far towards the toes as possible. Once the desired stretch is achieved hold for 10 to 15 seconds and repeat 3 times for each leg.

Standing Calf Stretch

This stretch targets the calf muscles, which there are actually three of all together. This stretch is also great for people that experience tightness in the Achilles Tendon as this is the insertion point for each of the three calf muscles.

To perform the stretch you place both hands on a wall and have one leg straight back while the other is forward and bent, as seen in the picture. Then by pushing against the wall and keeping the foot of the straight leg bent you can creat the desired tension in the the calf of the leg, hold for 10 to 15 sedonds and repeat 3 times.