



# Stretching Guide

## Why stretch?

Stretching before or after exercise can aid performance, endurance and recovery. Stretching can help to increase your range of motion and prevent injury to your muscles and joints; helping to improve your walking and running form.

## When to stretch

Stretch before and/or after you exercise. If you choose to stretch beforehand, start with a brief warm up by marching on the spot or walking for 3-5 minutes.

### Tips

- **Stretch slowly, ease in and out of each posture**
- **Hold each stretch for 30-45 seconds**
- **Repeat each stretch 1-3 times per leg/arm**
- **Avoid bouncing: this could lead to muscle sprains without proper warm-up**

The Heart Foundation suggests only participating in the recommended exercises to the extent that your personal physical capability allows. The Heart Foundation does not accept any liability, including for any injury, loss or damage, resulting from your participation in the recommended exercises. Participant discretion is advised.

## Here are some great stretches you can start with

### Quadriceps stretch

- Hold your ankle - tummy tucked
- Knees together
- Those who find balance a bit tricky may like to try holding on to a nearby bench or tree for extra support



### Calf stretch

- Back straight
- Back leg straight
- Heel on ground
- Front leg bent
- Supported by tree/pole/car/bench



### Seated hamstring stretch

- Sit with back straight
- Bend one knee
- One leg out straight
- Toes up
- Lean forward to reach towards/ touch your toes



### Hip flexor stretch

- Kneel on one knee
- One foot forward and flat on the ground
- Back straight
- Lean into front foot

