



VIENNA - AUSTRIA

## Tips For Optimal Stretching Results

### How to Stretch Properly?

While there are many benefits to be gained from effective stretching, employing an improper technique can actually result in injury. Here are some tips and guidelines for you to follow when stretching:

·Warm up first with an activity such as walking (at least 5 -10 minutes).

·Stretches should be pain-free. You should only feel tension or a tight feeling when stretching. If you feel a sharp pain, this means you're stretching too far and should relax a little.

·Don't hold your breath while stretching; keep breathing to ensure the muscle tissues remain oxygenated during the stretch.

·Stretch both sides. But, if one muscle is tighter than the other, focus on it more until they're both in the same range.

·Avoid bouncing at the end of the stretch because it may lead to injury.

·Hold stretches for 20-30 seconds, if not longer. A 10 second stretch is not always enough to achieve a lasting effect.

·Repeat the stretch 3-5 times with intermittent rest periods in between.

·Make sure your body is aligned properly and observe good posture.

### When to Stretch?

Traditionally, stretching has been encouraged before and after any kind of physical activity. However, recent studies show that there is no discerning difference between whether you stretch before exercise/sports or not, both-in terms of performance and injury prevention. In some cases, researchers say that it's okay to omit the pre-event stretch since the post-event stretch is much more beneficial.

Some of our everyday postures and activities can lead to certain muscles becoming tight while the others sit in a lengthened position. These habitual postures that lead to muscle imbalances then become more and more difficult to correct over time. Many therapists will suggest that stretching all muscles generically isn't as beneficial as identifying which of your muscles are abnormally tight and developing a targeted stretching regime.

**Talk to your physiotherapist for advice regarding the best stretching program for your body type, posture and activity levels.**



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## Brain Teaser

It's at the centre of gravity and you can find it in Venus, but not Mars. What is it?

PHYSIOTIP

**TIGHT MUSCLES  
ARE OFTEN WEAK  
MUSCLES.**

**STRENGTHENING  
MUSCLES CAN  
ALSO IMPROVE  
FLEXIBILITY.**

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# Focus on Metatarsalgia

## What is Metatarsalgia?

Metatarsalgia is a medical term used to describe pain that occurs in the ball of the foot. This occurs due to rubbing of the long bones of the foot, called metatarsals, causing inflammation. Build-up of inflammation in the ball of the foot compresses the small nerves that run between the toes and along the foot. Inflammation and compression of these small nerves is painful.

The pain can involve one or more joints of the foot including the big toe, second toe and third toe. It is unlikely to include the fourth or fifth joints. On occasion, the pain may involve the entire foot, or larger parts of the foot. The pain or symptoms may be made worse when bearing weight through the foot, such as walking or running. In severe cases, just standing or even wearing tight footwear can affect the foot.

## How does it happen?

Metatarsalgia can be caused by a number of things. An abrupt change in the posturing of the lower back or pelvis may alter the way the foot is loaded, and cause rubbing of the long bones. Altered loading of the foot may also be caused by arthritic conditions that affect the knees, hips or pelvis.

Unavoidable factors, which may lead to the development of metatarsalgia, include increased age, and the physical shape of the foot and toe. As your body ages, the ligaments of the foot may loosen or weaken. Therefore, the bones of the foot move differently leading to altered positioning and loading of the foot.

Avoidable factors, which may lead to the development of metatarsalgia, include wearing inappropriately fitting footwear, and the type of exercise performed. Metatarsalgia is more highly associated with high-impact-type exercise such as running or gymnastics.

## How can Physio help?

Your physio will determine the cause of the metatarsalgia pain and assist you with adapting your posture or improving the loading pattern of your foot. You may be advised to unload the foot by reducing or stopping exercise, changing the shoe you wear, or strengthening certain muscles in your legs.

Electrotherapeutic modalities such as icing, ultrasound or interferential therapy may be of assistance to reduce pain and inflammation in the beginning stages of treatment as well.

**None of the information in this article is a replacement for proper medical advice. Always see a medical professional for advice on your condition.**



Answers: The letter V

## Creamy Tomato and Basil Soup

### Ingredients

- 1 can of whole peeled tomatoes
- 1 small onion, diced
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 cups of vegetable or chicken broth
- 1/2 cup of coconut cream
- 1/4 cup of chopped fresh basil
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 teaspoon of cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon of smoked paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon of cayenne pepper
- Salt and pepper to taste



1. To begin, sauté diced onions and minced garlic in olive oil until they're soft. Then, add in a can of whole peeled tomatoes with their juice and some vegetable or chicken broth. Let the mixture simmer for about 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally and breaking up the tomatoes with a spoon.
2. Once the soup has cooled a bit, use an immersion blender or a regular blender to puree it until it's smooth. Return the soup to the pot and stir in the coconut cream and some freshly chopped basil.
3. For a bit of heat, add some cumin, smoked paprika, and cayenne pepper to the soup, adjusting the amount of cayenne to your desired level of spiciness. Let the soup cook over low heat for another 5-10 minutes until it's creamy and heated through.
4. Finally, season the soup with salt and pepper to taste and serve hot with your favourite bread or croutons.

**Serves 4**



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