

Exercises for Young Athletes

Staying injury-free throughout the sports season requires a proper conditioning and exercise program. Here are some stretching exercises developed by the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons that young athletes can perform before participating in any athletic activity.

Athletes must do each one of the exercises carefully, speed is not important. Once the exercise routine is learned, the entire program should take no longer than 10 minutes.

It also is important to warm up before doing any of these exercises. Good examples of warm up activities are slowly running in place and walking for a few minutes.

Seat Straddle Lotus



Sit down; place soles of feet together and drop knees toward floor. Place forearms on inside of knees and push knees to the ground. Lean forward, bringing chin to feet. Hold for five seconds. Repeat three to six times.

Seat Side Straddle



Sit with legs spread; place both hands on same ankle. Bring chin to knee, keeping the leg straight. Hold for five seconds. Repeat three to six times. Repeat exercise on opposite leg.

Seat Stretch



Sit with legs together, feet flexed, hands on ankles. Bring chin to knees. Hold for five seconds. Repeat three to six times.

Lying, Quad Stretch



Lie on back with one leg straight, the other leg with hip turned in and knee bent. Press knee to floor. Hold for five seconds.
Repeat three to six times.

Knees to Chest



Lie on back with knees bent. Grasp tops of knees and bring them out toward the armpits, rocking gently. Hold for five seconds. Repeat three to five times.

Forward Lunges



Kneel on left leg; place right leg forward at a right angle. Lunge forward, keeping the back straight. Stretch should be felt on the left groin. Hold for five seconds. Repeat three to six times. Repeat on opposite leg.

Side Lunges



Stand with legs apart; bend the left knee while leaning toward the left. Keep the back straight and the right leg straight. Hold for five seconds. Repeat three to six times. Repeat on opposite leg.

Cross-Over



Stand with legs crossed; keep feet close together and legs straight. Touch toes. Hold for five seconds. Repeat three to six times.
Repeat with opposite leg.

Standing Quad Stretch



Stand supported. Pull foot to buttocks. Hold for five seconds.
Repeat three to six times.

For more information on "Prevent Injuries America!®," call the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons' public service telephone number 1-800-824-BONES (2663).

Portuguese Translation

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