

STRETCHING STRATEGIES

STRETCHING IS A KEY COMPONENT

of any fitness routine. However, when time is limited — especially as the autumn days grow shorter — many of us take a risk by heading straight for the trail without properly caring for our muscles. Hurried folks should take heed that exercising without stretching is always risky, but if you need more motivation, take the advice of stretch expert Bill McDonald. For 15 years, McDonald has been practicing the Mattes Method, a dynamic approach to stretching that comprises

the core of his multi-discipline practice. Through a series of active isolated stretches — different from the static poses that make up most routines — it's possible to increase flexibility, enhance athletic performance and avoid pain during your workouts (not to mention the rigors of daily life). With time and technique, lengthening and oxygenating your muscles can keep you loose and flexible while adding a noticeable spring to your step. So, why not slow down, steal a few moments from your busy day and savor the feeling of a good stretch?



Glut Stretch Lie on your back keeping your legs in a “figure 4” position. Pull the knee up and across the body, making sure it comes toward the outside of the opposite shoulder. Hold for a two count. Return to starting position and repeat.



Hamstring Stretch Keep your non-working leg bent and slowly lift up the straight leg with the thigh (quad) muscle. Have your hands walk hand-over-hand to the point of stretch. Hold for a two count. Return to starting position and repeat.



Calf Stretch Start in a seated position. Keep the knee locked by contracting the thigh. Bring your foot toward the knee with muscles on top of the lower leg, assisting with the rope. Hold for a two count. Return to starting position and repeat.



Quad (Thigh) Stretch Start on your side with hip flexed at 90°. Bring heel to buttocks with hamstring and hold with hand. Using the gluts, bring the leg to its stretch point. Hold for a two count. Return to starting position and repeat.



Web Workout:

Visit AustinFitMagazine.com for an extended video editorial of these four stretches as well as others explained and demonstrated by Bill McDonald.