

Stretching Guide for Rugby

Physiotherapy in Comox for Rugby

Stretching is an essential part of playing rugby. A good stretching routine can help to minimize muscle imbalances, prevent injury, improve your exercise tolerance and your rugby performance. The following stretching program is designed for rugby players who do not have any current injuries or individual stretching needs. If you have an injury, or a specific mechanical imbalance that may be holding back your rugby performance, your physiotherapist at Bodyworx Physiotherapy Pilates & Health can design a stretching program just for you.

When is the Best Time to Stretch?

When your muscles are warm and relaxed! For optimum performance you should stretch after you have done a general body warm up of about 5-10 minutes (light running, cycling, or light whole body rugby-specific drills.) You should also stretch after your training or game. You may need to continue stretching throughout the game or training if there are breaks where your muscles start to cool down (i.e. between training drills, at half time, or if you are not playing for a period of the game.) Rugby is a dynamic sport so you'll need both dynamic and static stretching. Dynamic stretches form part of your pre-game or training warm-up. They are used to prepare your muscles for the rapid elongation they will incur during the game. Static stretches, on the other hand, are more useful to improve your overall flexibility and are most effectively done at the end of your cool down.

Rules for Dynamic Stretching:

- Warm up your body first, then stretch while your muscles are still warm.
- Move through your range of movement, keeping control of the movement with your muscles. Do not allow momentum to control the movement by "flinging" or "throwing" your body parts around.
- You may feel light resistance in your muscles, but you should never feel pain during a stretch.
- Start with slow, low intensity movements, and gradually progress to full-speed movements through range of motion. Complete these motions for several repetitions (10-15 times.)
- Finish with simulated quick rugby movements such as crouching, or reaching for a pass. Repeat for several repetitions (8-10 times.)

Rules for Static Stretching:

- Warm up the muscles first.
- Slowly take your muscles to the end of their range. You will feel slight resistance in the muscle, but you should never feel pain during a stretch.
- Hold the stretch in a static position. Do not bounce.
- Hold each stretch for 20-30 seconds. Repeat each stretch 3-4 times.

Essential Stretches for Rugby:

These muscles are your prime movers for rugby. You'll need to stretch these muscles each time you train or play. Don't forget to stretch both sides. The stretching program shown below will take about 15 minutes to complete.

Dynamic Stretches:

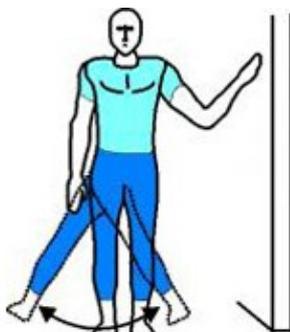
Arm Swings



Leg Swings Forward and Back



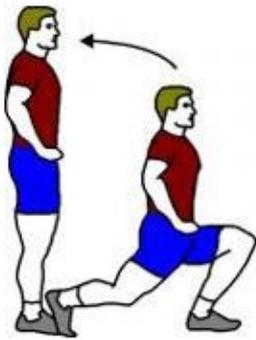
Leg Swings Sideways



Back Rotation Stretch:



Lunges



Leg Curls



Static Stretches

Lower Back Extension



Hamstring stretch



Quadriceps stretch



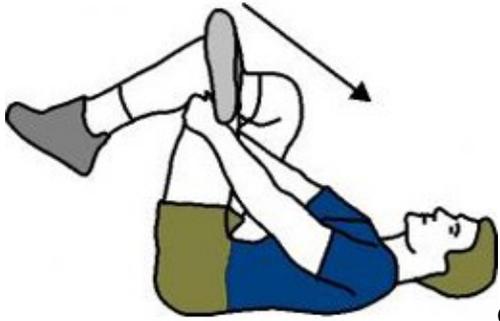
Hip Flexor Stretch



Groin Stretch



Gluteal Stretch



Calf Stretch-Gastrocnemius



Posterior Shoulder Stretch

