

Flexibility

There is promising evidence that exercise preserves the ability to maintain independent living status and reduces risk of falling. Stability and balance are closely related to flexibility. Flexibility is the ability to move, bend, stretch, and twist easily to use the joints and muscles throughout their full range of motion. Flexibility is needed to meet the ordinary challenges of daily life. Flexibility is the key to injury prevention.

Flexibility and stretching exercises should be done slowly and smoothly, allowing the muscles to stretch and let go. Vigorous bouncing, bobbing, and pulling in an attempt to stretch out tight muscles defeats your purpose. It confuses the muscles by sending out conflicting messages, which can result in a loss of flexibility.

When doing stretching exercises, move slowly; when the first sign of tension occurs, hold that position for 10 – 30 seconds, then relax. Repeat the exercise several times. If the stretch begins to hurt, stop. Overextending poorly prepared muscles can lead to injury. Listen to your body; pain indicates that you are stretching

incorrectly. If stretching feels good, you are probably doing it right. Include stretching exercises as part of your daily routine.

Warm up and cool down are important safety components of every exercise session. Warming up reduces the risk of straining or pulling a cold stiff muscle and makes muscles and joints more flexible. Cooling down gently returns the body to a less active state and helps prevent muscle cramps and dizziness.

Flexibility is crucial to balance and stability. It promotes good health, injury prevention, daily performance, and the

ability to perform cardiovascular fitness programs, like walking. It's simple, takes little time, and results in multiple health benefits.

Benefits of Flexibility

- Enhances the ability to perform daily tasks
- Reduces risk of falling
- Helps build healthy bones
- Improves performance in recreational activities
- Prevents muscle and joint soreness
- Helps build strength