

# THE IMPORTANCE OF FLEXIBILITY

To maintain the muscle tendons, ligaments, and joint capsule at their optimal functional length. *INFLEXIBILITY* may predispose one to muscle strains, ligamentous sprains or tears as well abnormal joint motion and degeneration.

Overstretching of a muscle group, ligament or joint capsule may lead to muscular weakness, joint laxity, and instability.

## WHAT IS BEING STRETCHED?

1. Muscle belly and tendons
2. Ligaments
3. Joint capsule

## HOW TO STRETCH

1. Slowly move to a position of gentle pulling in the muscle.
2. Hold this position for 15-20 seconds and **DO NOT BOUNCE**.
3. Progress further into this position until a gentle pull is again felt.
4. Repeat the sequence 5-10 times.
5. Proper position to allow the pull to be felt in the muscle, rather than in the joint, assures effective stretching and minimal overstretching.
6. Stretching in a sequence of neck, upper back, chest, lower back and trunk, arms and legs permits optimal stretching of all muscle groups.

## WHEN TO STRETCH

1. After warming up prior to exercise.
2. Again, after exercise while the muscle is still warm, can be used as an appropriate cool-down activity.
3. Do not stretch a cold muscle.

## ACTIVITIES FOR WARM-UP

1. Jogging
2. Jumping rope
3. Jumping jacks
4. Walking

Warm-up should last 3-5 minutes to increase core body temperature. A light sweat is a good indicator of when the core body temperature is adequately raised to achieve a proper warm-up.