

Stretching & Mobility

An often overlooked aspect of a fitness regimen is stretching and mobility work. **Stretching** refers to applying tension to a muscle by holding it in a fully lengthened position (think of the effect on your hamstrings when reaching for your toes). **Mobility** refers to anything that improves the ability of a joint to move through its entire healthy range of motion. More attention to stretching and mobility will help prevent injury on our muscles and joints, and also allow us to perform better in the gym or on the field.

Static Stretching

- A good stretching routine can be done post-workout and should include some static stretches for large muscle groups (hamstrings, glutes, pectorals, lats, groin, quads).
- The point is to gradually stretch the muscle--there is no need to be in a position that causes pain. Keep the muscle under tension but not beyond its limit.
- Hold the position at that end range of motion, and do not bounce.
- Aim to hold these positions for 30 seconds-1 minute.
- Stretching should be done after a general warm-up, as pulling on a “cold” muscle can actually increase the risk for injury.



Mobility

- Mobility helps achieve a more efficient use of our joints by using the full range of motion in which they are capable.
- Mobility work is generally best suited for the ankles, hips, thoracic spine, and shoulders.
- Explore the current range of motion in these joints and gradually work on improving that range by stretching the tissues and muscles that affect that joint. For example, increasing the thoracic spine mobility will help you keep your chest up in a squat for a more efficient and safer lift.
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- A great way to improve thoracic spine mobility is via foam rolling.

