

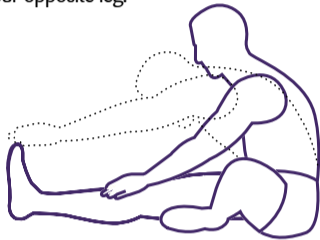
The Runners Guide to Essential Stretches

Personal Trainer Olly Jones BSc shares his top tips and advice to avoid sprains and strains.



HAMSTRING MUSCLE STRETCH

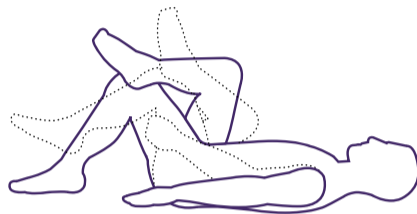
Method: Sit with one leg folded in and the other leg straight out, your foot should be upright with your toes and ankles relaxed. Lean forward slightly and touch the foot of your straightened leg. Repeat the stretch with your opposite leg.



Why? The hamstring is the key muscle when bending the knee, it is paramount you do not have limited flexibility in your hamstrings otherwise they are at risk of a strain or tear.

GLUTE MUSCLE STRETCH

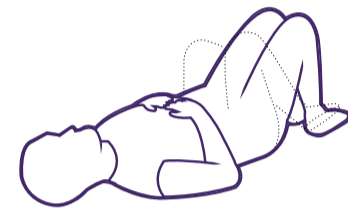
Method: Lie on your back with your knees bent. Place your right ankle on your left knee and let your right knee fall outwards. Pull your left thigh towards your chest to feel the stretch in the right buttock. Repeat the stretch with your opposite leg.



Why? Your hips need to be both stable and powerful when running, so stretching those bottom muscles is vital for optimum function and gait.

LOWER BACK STRETCH

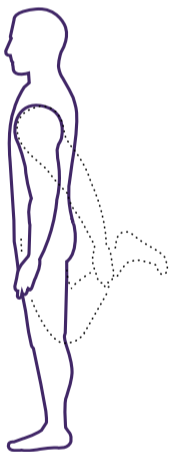
Method: Lie on your back with your knees bent. Gently let both knees drop to one side – you should feel the stretch on the opposite side of your back. Repeat the stretch the other way.



Why? Often with running, if posture is not 100% some strain can go through the lower back. Loosening these off post run should negate any problems or tightness.

QUADRICEPS MUSCLE STRETCH

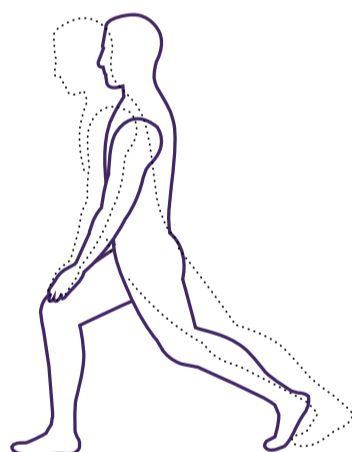
Method: While standing, hold the top of your foot with your opposite hand and gently pull your heel towards your buttocks. Repeat the stretch with your opposite leg.



Why? They are the opposing muscle group to the hamstrings, the quads help take the impact and propel you with force away from the floor, they will probably be the muscles you utilise most during your run so stretching them is key, as tightness can lead to knee pain.

CALF MUSCLE STRETCH

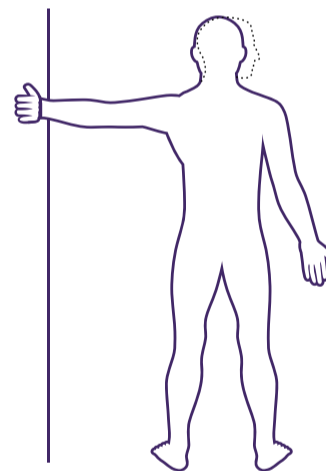
Method: Start with a standing lunge with both your feet pointed forward, then straighten one leg out behind you. Repeat the stretch with your opposite leg.



Why? The calf is a delicate muscle group and can take a lot of force during running, they help you push through your toes when driving the floor away. Calf injuries can be slow to heal as they never really get rested fully, so prevention is definitely better than cure on these.

PECTORAL STRETCH

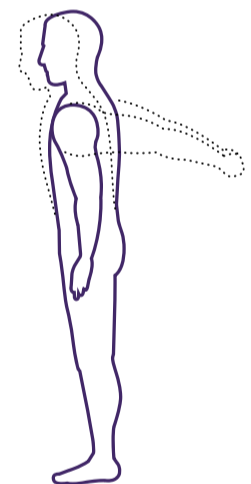
Method: Stand next to a wall with your right arm at 90 degrees out to the side. With the palm of your hand resting against the wall, gently turn your body away from the right side to feel the stretch across your right pectoral. Repeat the stretch with your left arm.



Why? Tight chest muscles can lead to a rounded shoulder position forcing a more hunched running style, which can then lead to some muscles being overloaded and at risk of straining, so releasing and opening the chest cavity up will mean a better style and greater efficiency during your run.

POSTURE STRETCH

Method: Stand up straight and link your hands behind your back, push your chest outwards and pull your arms back.



TOP TIP: HOLD THE STRETCH FOR 15 TO 30 SECONDS AND REPEAT 2 TO 4 TIMES. NEVER STRETCH TO THE POINT OF PAIN.

What to do if you experience a sprain or strain...

Remember the acronym PRICE

PROTECT - look after the area with an appropriate support

REST - avoid activity for 2 or 3 days

ICE - pack in a damp towel to stop the swelling

COMPRESS - use a bandage or grip

ELEVATE - keep the affected area raised

If you need further pain relief there are lots of options available at your local pharmacy such as creams and gels which are quick and convenient to use.

Olly Jones is currently working with Movelat as part of a campaign to encourage people to get back in to exercise following injury or a lapse in a safe and responsible way.*

Movelat Relief Cream and Gel is effective for local relief of pain and inflammation caused by rheumatic and muscular pain, stiffness, sprains, strains and mild arthritic conditions. Ask your pharmacist about Movelat today.

For more information, visit www.movelat.co.uk. RRP. £4.62 (40g) and £7.36 (80g). Always read the label.

*Olly Jones does not endorse Movelat

