

COOL DOWN ROUTINE

Once you have finished running and your heart rate is returning to normal, it is important to stretch key muscle groups to reduce stiffness/tightness. Static stretching after a run is also important to restore length in muscles as a kind of preparation for your next run.

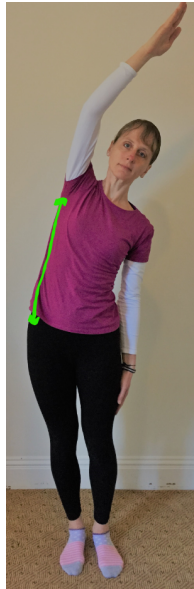
Please note that:

- Static stretching should only be undertaken after your run. For warm up exercises (dynamic), please see the other document.
- You should only stretch to the point of feeling a slight pulling, but no pain
- It takes 6 seconds for the stretch reflex to kick in, so you need to hold each stretch for a minimum of 15 seconds. For really tight muscles, do not extend the stretch further but either hold for up to a minute, or repeat a couple of shorter stretches until you feel an improvement.
- Do not bounce up and down when stretching
- Muscles stretch best in straight lines, so posture is important.
- Don't forget to breathe whilst stretching!!

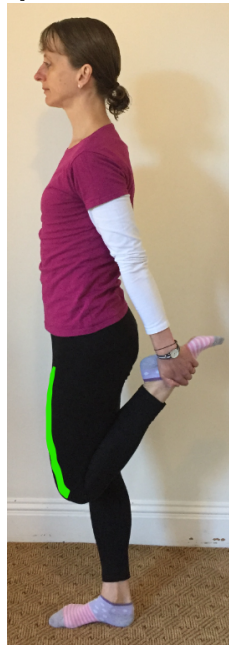
1. Full body stretch: interlink your fingers and stand with your legs a hip width apart, squeeze glutes, tuck your tail bone in and have feet facing forward. Stretch your arms above your head and breathe (hold for 5 breaths).



2. **Side stretches:** take one arm up high first (height is more important than how far over you can lean), then lean over sideways to feel a stretch in your torso.



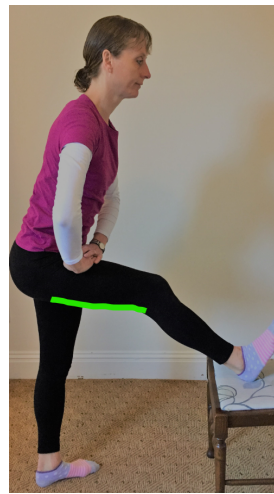
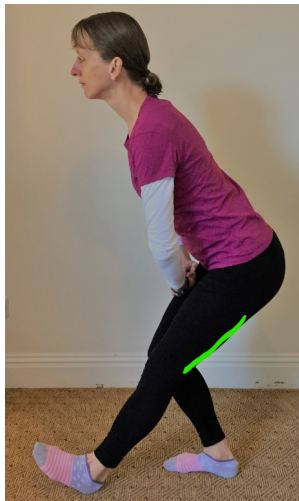
3. **Quad stretch.** Your quadriceps are the large muscles at the front of your upper leg/thigh. Stand straight and keep feet together. Facing forwards, hold your ankle and pull your leg towards your buttock. If you cannot reach with your hand, use a belt to loop around your ankle. Repeat on other leg.



4. Hamstring stretch. Your hamstrings are the muscles at the back of your upper leg.

Version A: Facing forwards, place your leg out in front of you with 'loose knees' (do not lock your knees), toes facing upwards. Lean from the hips with a straight back, placing your hands on the other leg (but not applying pressure). Repeat on your other leg.

Version B: Facing forwards, place your leg on a chair or similar height and lean from the hips.



5. Calf muscles. Your larger/upper calf muscles (gastrocnemius) are situated at the back of your lower leg. Stand facing a wall. Place your hands at chest height. Bend front leg, stretch out back leg behind you. Imagine a line from your ear to your back heel – keep your back straight and look forwards. Repeat on both legs.



- 6. Gluteal muscles. Your 'glutes' are your buttock muscles! Sit on a chair with a straight back. Place one ankle over your knee. For a deeper stretch, lean forward slightly. Repeat on other leg.**

