

Elements in the Prevention of Injuries in Baseball: part 2.

STRETCHING

Why stretch? Because ...

- the increased flexibility which is attained through stretching results in a decreased incidence of muscle injuries.
- stretching minimizes and alleviates muscle soreness and may enhance athletic performance
- it maintains flexibility so muscles can respond effectively during sporting activity.

When should baseballers stretch?

- during warm up
- during cool down

How should baseballers stretch?

Stretching must be performed regularly to maintain and improve flexibility.

- **STATIC STRETCHING** is an important technique during cool down and as a method of increasing flexibility.
- **DYNAMIC STRETCHING** is more appropriate during warm up as it is important during athletic performance.

GUIDELINES FOR SAFE STRETCHING

- warm up prior to stretching (ie light run)
- stretch before and after exercise - **dynamic** stretches BEFORE and **static** stretches AFTER exercise.
- Static stretching should be slow and gentle
- Stretch to a point of tension but NEVER to a point of pain
- Do not hold your breath when stretching. Breathing should be slow and easy

TO MAINTAIN FLEXIBILITY static stretches need to be maintained for a minimum of 20 seconds and repeated four (4) times DAILY.

TO INCREASE FLEXIBILITY, it is reported that a stretch may need to be held for greater than seven (7) minutes. Remember to ease into a stretch and as the tension decreases, SLOWLY ease further into the stretch - again this should be done WITHOUT discomfort.

DURING COOL DOWN stretching should be held for a minimum of 20 seconds

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