

COOL-DOWN GUIDE



EQUESTRIAN

***Special
Olympics***





Special Olympics **Health**

MADE
POSSIBLE BY **Golisano** FOUNDATION

This resource was supported by cooperative agreement #NU27DD001156 from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are the responsibility of Special Olympics and do not necessarily represent the view of CDC.

Cool-Down Directions

When your training, practice or sport session is complete, you should always cool-down. A good cool-down allows your body to gradually return to a state of rest.

A typical cool-down includes:

1. Light aerobic activity
2. Static stretching

The aerobic activity in a cool-down should decrease in intensity. It could be a light jog, moving into a brisk walk and finally ending to a slow walk.

After you complete the light aerobic activity, you will want to stretch. Stretching for flexibility is very effective in the cool-down.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- Hold each stretch for **at least 30 seconds**.
- **Stretch both sides** – if you stretch your right shoulder muscle, stretch the left!
- Stretches should be performed to **mild discomfort**, but should not be painful.



Sample Cool-Down

LIGHT AEROBIC ACTIVITY

The light aerobic activity in a cool-down should decrease in intensity. It could be a light jog, moving into a brisk walk and finally ending to a slow walk.

STATIC STRETCHES

Unlike dynamic stretches, static stretches consist of one position that is held in place. If you don't have enough time, select a few that focus on the different muscles used in your sport:

- Cross Arm Shoulder Stretch
- Hamstring Stretch
- Kneeling Hip Stretch
- Shoulder Rotation Stretch
- Side Stretch
- Standing Back Bend
- Standing Chest Stretch



Cross Arm Shoulder Stretch

DIRECTIONS

- Cross your left arm across your chest with your elbow slightly bent. Make sure to keep your left shoulder down away from your ear.
- Place your right hand on the back of your left arm just above the elbow. Pull your left arm in toward your chest until you feel a stretch. Repeat with your right arm.



Hamstring Stretch

DIRECTIONS

- Stand tall with your left foot a few inches in front of your right foot. Lift your left toes.
- Bend your right knee slightly and lean your body forward.
- Reach for your left toes with your left hand. Keep your right hand on top of your right thigh for balance and support.
- You should feel a stretch in the back of your left leg.
- Repeat the stretch with your right leg forward.

NOTE: You can also do this stretch kneeling on the ground.



Kneeling Hip Stretch

DIRECTIONS

- Kneel on the ground.
- Take one big step forward. Bend your front leg.
- Push your hips forward and put your hands on your hips. You should feel a stretch in your back leg's hip area.
- Repeat the stretch with the other leg in front.



Shoulder Rotation Stretch



DIRECTIONS

- Stand or sit tall.
- Put your right arm next to your ear. Bend your elbow and reach your hand down as far as you can on your back.
- Now reach your left arm behind your back. Bend your elbow and reach your left hand as high up on your back as you can.
- You should feel a stretch in both shoulders.
- Repeat the stretch with your left arm next to you.



Side Stretch



DIRECTIONS

- Stand tall with your feet a little wider than your hips.
- Bring your left arm up so that it is close to your ear.
- Bend sideways at your waist toward your right side. Keep your arm next to your ear the whole time. You should feel a stretch in the left side of your torso.
- Repeat with your right arm up and your left side bent.



Standing Back Bend



DIRECTIONS

- Stand tall. Place the palms of your hands on your lower back, with your fingers pointing downward, as you squeeze your elbows together.
- Exhale to arch your back, only go as far as feels comfortable for your body.



Standing Chest Stretch



DIRECTIONS

- Stand and put your hands together behind your back.
- Raise your hands up as high as possible while keeping your elbows straight. Push your chest forward.
- Keep your back straight and chin up.



Benefits of a Cool-Down

It is just as important to have a good cool-down as it is to have a good warm-up. A good cool-down **allows the body to gradually return to a state of rest.**

Physical and Mental Benefits

- Decrease heart rate
- Decrease breathing rate
- Decrease body and muscle temperature
- Returns rate of blood flow from the active muscles to resting level
- Decrease muscle soreness
- Improve flexibility
- Increases the rate of recovery from exercise
- Promote relaxation