

COOL-DOWN GUIDE



GYMNASTICS

***Special
Olympics***





Special Olympics **Health**

MADE
POSSIBLE BY **Golisano** FOUNDATION

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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:

- Calf Stretch
- Cross Body Shoulder Stretch
- Figure Four Stretch
- Kneeling Hip Stretch
- Knee to Chest
- Quadriceps Stretch
- Seated Rotation Stretch
- Standing Chest Stretch
- Triceps Stretch
- Wrist Flexion and Extension



Calf Stretch



DIRECTIONS

- Stand facing a wall. Put your hands against the wall at shoulder height.
- Put one foot in front of the other.
- Bend your elbows and lean in toward the wall. You will feel a stretch in your calves.
- Keep your knee straight and your hips forward. Make sure your heel stays on the ground.
- Switch your feet and repeat the 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.



Figure Four Stretch

DIRECTIONS

- Lay on the ground with your right knee in the air.
- Put your left ankle on top of your right thigh.
- Grab underneath your right thigh. Pull your thigh towards your chest. You should feel a stretch in your left hip.
- Switch legs and repeat the stretch.



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.



Knee to Chest

DIRECTIONS

- Lie on your back with your legs straight.
- Bring your right knee toward your chest.
- Wrap your hands underneath your knee. Pull your leg closer to your body until you feel a stretch in the back of your right thigh.
- Repeat the stretch on your left leg.



Quadriceps Stretch

DIRECTIONS

- Stand up tall and shift your weight to your right leg.
- Lift your left foot and hold it with your left hand. You may put your right hand on a stable surface, like the back of a chair or wall, to help you balance.
- Pull your left foot toward your body until you feel a stretch in the front of your left leg.
- Switch legs and repeat the stretch on your right leg.

NOTE: You can also do this stretch laying down.



Seated Rotation Stretch

DIRECTIONS

- Sit tall on the floor with your legs straight out in front of you.
- Cross your right leg over your left leg. Put your right foot on the floor close to your left knee.
- Turn your upper body towards your right side. Use your right arm to help you sit tall. Use your left arm against your right leg to help you twist. You should feel a stretch in your hip and the side of your back.
- Switch sides and repeat the stretch.



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.



Triceps Stretch

DIRECTIONS

- Stand or sit tall with your left arm by your ear. Bend your elbow so that your hand touches your back.
- Reach over your head with your right arm. Grab your left elbow with your right hand. Pull your left arm even closer to your ear. You should feel a stretch in your upper left arm.
- Repeat the stretch with your right arm by your ear and your left arm grabbing your right elbow.



Wrist Flexion & Extension



FLEXION

DIRECTIONS

- Sit or stand with your head up and looking forward.
- **Extension:** Turn your palm towards the ground. Use the other hand to pull your hand down toward the ground.
- **Flexion:** Turn your palm face up toward the ceiling. Use the other hand to pull your fingers back toward the ground.
- Switch arms and repeat both stretches.



EXTENSION

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

