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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:

- Cross Arm Shoulder Stretch
- Knee to Chest
- Side Stretch
- Standing Back Bend
- Standing Chest Stretch
- Triceps Stretch
- Wrist Flexion and Extension
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.
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.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Novie Craven
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.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Joe Wu
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

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.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Robbie Albano
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