

## **BASIC STRETCH PROGRAMME**

Developing a good stretching regime both **before and after** exercising will help in improving your flexibility. Stretching will also lead to a reduction in muscle tension and an increase in your joints' range of motion, again reducing the risk of injury.

Daily stretching will also be important while you are on your expedition. It is important that before stretching, all muscles and especially the joints are warmed up. Only ever stretch warmed up muscles. All muscles, tendons and ligaments need an adequate blood flow so as not to become over stretched or torn. A slow rotation of the joints can be performed after the warm up to provide optimum blood flow to these areas. The warm up should involve light exercise which is best if it is activity specific i.e. a short cycle ride, light jog on the spot, brisk walk for about 5 minutes. This can be done as part of the whole exercise programme and the stretches done on route after the first 5 minute warm up.

Never stretch too far. You should feel a slow pull on the muscle with no pain. It is important that all stretches are done slowly under control and that no bouncing or dynamic stretching is attempted. If you have any injuries, then it may be advisable to be especially careful whilst exercising and stretching. If in doubt, see your doctor before undertaking any warm up, stretching programmes or general exercise.

The easiest way to keep to a good stretch programme is start at the top and work down. This will help you not to forget or miss out any vital body area. All stretches should be held for about 10 seconds.

### **Neck**

- Stand with arms hanging loosely at your sides.
- Turn head, keeping it level, to one side looking over your shoulder and hold.
- Repeat with head to other side and hold.
- Repeat.
- Stand with arms hanging loosely at your sides.
- Gently tilt head sideways pushing your ear to your shoulder and hold.
- Repeat with head to other shoulder and hold.
- Repeat.
- Stand with arms hanging loosely at your sides.
- Gently tilt head forwards and hold.
- Repeat.

### **Shoulders and Upper Arms**

- Stand and place right arm horizontally across your chest.
- Place left hand on elbow of right arm and press down and pull across body and hold.
- Swap arms, repeating process and hold.
- Repeat.

### **Shoulders, Upper Arms and Waist**

- Stand with knees slightly flexed.
- Put right arm over head with arm bent onto top of head.
- Hold right elbow with left hand.
- Pull elbow behind head gently as you slowly lean to your side and hold.
- Repeat on other side.
- Repeat.

### **Shoulders, Back, Arms, Hands, Fingers and Wrists**

- Interlace fingers and turn palms outwards.
- Extend arms in front at shoulder height and hold.
- Repeat.

### **Back**

- Stand with hands on hips.
- Gently twist entire torso at the waist keeping the head in line and hold.
- Repeat the process twisting in the opposite direction.
- Repeat.

### **Hamstrings**

- Stand with your feet at shoulders width apart.
- Bend your knees and bring your hands down to hold the back of your calves.
- Slowly straighten your knees and hold.
- Bend your knees to release the stretch and then slowly stand up.
- Repeat.

### **Quadriceps**

- Stand with one hand against a wall for support.
- Standing straight, grasp top of your left foot with your right hand.
- Pull heel towards your bottom and hold.
- Your knees must be close together.
- You can push your hips forward to increase the stretch if needed.
- Repeat on the other leg.
- Repeat.

### **Groin**

- Stand with your feet pointed straight ahead and legs about 1m apart.
- Bend your right knee slightly and move your left hip downward towards right knee and hold.
- Keep your back straight and head looking forwards.
- You can increase the width of your legs to improve the stretch if necessary.
- Swap legs and repeat.
- Repeat.

### **Calves**

- Stand facing a wall and lean on it with crossed forearms and head resting on your arms.
- Place right foot in front of you with leg bent, left leg straight behind you.
- Keep both feet facing forward.
- Slowly move hips forward until you feel the calf stretch in the left leg and hold.
- Do not bounce and do not hold your breath.
- Swap over legs and repeat process.
- Repeat.

### **Ankles**

- Hold onto something for balance.
- Raise your right leg and point your foot straight forward and your toes downwards and hold.
- Turn the foot to the left, keeping the leg straight, and hold.
- Turn the foot to the right, keeping the leg straight, and hold.
- Turn the foot up towards you pointing the toes straight up and hold.
- Swap legs and repeat process.
- Repeat.

### **Whole Body Stretch**

- Stand with feet together.
- Clasp hands and reach over head as high as possible and hold.
- Repeat x 3.

**These notes were compiled by Brian Jackson, BA (Hons) in Sport, Health and Physical Education, who operates a series of PreChallenge Training Weekends in Snowdonia, UK.**