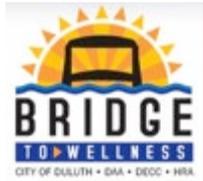




# City of Duluth Flexibility (Stretching) Program (Perform with or without a Basketball)



## Why perform flexibility exercises?

- The range of motion (ROM) around a joint is improved immediately after performing flexibility exercise.
- Flexibility exercises help to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injury, and can also improve postural stability and balance. The goal of a flexibility program is to develop ROM in the major muscle/tendon groups.

## Instructions

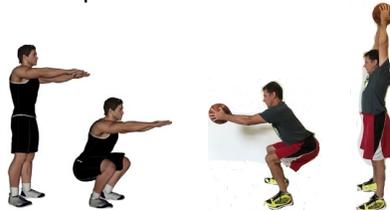
- Flexibility exercise is most effective when the muscle temperature is increased through warm-up exercises.
- Unless otherwise noted, hold each stretch for 10-30 seconds to the point of slight tightness. Repeat each stretch 2-4 times, accumulating 60 seconds per stretch. If you experience pain, do not do the stretch.
- Adjust time/duration and repetitions according to individual needs, for example, two 30 second or four 15 second stretches. Modify to shorter duration, 5-10 seconds, and add more repetitions if muscles are tight.
- Slowly move into and out of each stretch position while breathing deeply. Go as far as your body is capable.
- Basketball can be dribbled or bounced for active counting of seconds when performing some of the stretches.

### Warm Up

- Ensure the muscles are warmed up before performing flexibility exercises.
- Play basketball/shoot baskets for 5-10 minutes to increase the heart rate and get blood flowing to the muscles.
- Alternatively, jog or march in place, or do some jumping jacks for 5-10 minutes to increase the heart rate and get blood flowing to the muscles.

### Body Weight Squats

- Stand with back straight and feet hip width apart.
- Hold basketball at belly button level with bend in elbows, or extend arms parallel to floor.
- Bend knees and lower hips until thighs are parallel to floor while keeping back flat (bend knees within comfort limits).
- Stand up and raise arms overhead with basketball, or keep arms parallel to floor.
- Repeat 10-15 times.



### Shoulder Rolls

- Stand with back straight and feet hip width apart.
- Hold basketball at belly button level with bend in elbows, or hold arms at sides
- Elevate shoulders upward toward ears, rotate them backwards, down, and then forward in a continuous circular motion.
- Repeat 5 times, reverse direction, and repeat 5 times.



### Reaching Upper Back Stretch

- Stand with arms out in front either with hands crossed at wrists or hold on to basketball.
- Slowly push hands forward as far as possible and let head fall forward.
- Stand upright and repeat.



### Reverse Shoulder Stretch

- Clasp hands behind back or hold basketball behind back.
- Keep arms straight and slowly lift hands upwards.
- Return to start position and repeat.



### Parallel Arm Chest Stretch

- Stand with arm extended to the rear and parallel to the ground.
- Hold on to an immovable object (wall). Turn shoulders and body away from outstretched arm.
- Place other hand on hip, or dribble basketball to count seconds.
- Perform stretch on both sides.



### Forward Bend

- If you have disc problems or experience back pain, do not do this stretch.
- Stand with back straight, feet hip width apart, and arms at sides.
- If using basketball, hold at belly button level with bend in elbows.
- While maintaining a straight back, slightly bend knees, hinge forward at the hips (top of legs) and extend arms toward the floor as far as possible. Place hands on knees, shins, ankles, or floor.
- Dribble/bounce basketball to count seconds.
- Stand upright and repeat.



### Side Bend

- If you have disc problems or experience back pain, do not do this stretch.
- Stand with back straight, feet hip width apart, and hands on hips.
- If using basketball, hold and extend arms vertically overhead.
- Reach up with one or both hands as high as possible and bend slightly to the left side until stretch is felt in the waist and up through the shoulder.
- Stand upright and bend slightly to the right side.
- Repeat on both sides.



### Backward Bend

- If you have disc problems or experience back pain, do not do this stretch.
- Stand with back straight, feet hip width apart, and hands on hips.
- If using basketball, hold and extend arms vertically overhead.
- Lift chest up and arch back to gently lean backwards while simultaneously pushing hips forward.
- You should feel compression, not pain in the lower back.
- Stand upright and repeat.



### Standing Hamstring Stretch

- Stand with back straight, feet hip width apart and arms at sides.
- If using basketball, hold at belly button level with bend in elbows.
- With toes facing forward, place right foot one stride length in front of the left foot with heel down and toes pointing up towards ceiling.
- Bend the left knee, hinge at the hips (top of leg), push hips back, and keep back flat.
- Stretch will be felt in back of right thigh.
- Dribble or bounce basketball to count seconds.
- Repeat with left leg forward.
- Repeat on each side.



### Kneeling Hip & Quad Stretch

- Perform without basketball.
- Kneel on left knee and right foot.
- If needed, hold on to something to keep your balance.
- Gently push your hips forward while bending right knee, and keeping back straight.
- Stretch will be felt in front of hips and in quadriceps.
- Repeat.
- Switch to other side: kneel on right knee and left foot.
- Repeat.



### Single Heel-drop Calf Stretch

- Perform without basketball.
- Stand on a raised object or step.
- Place the ball of right foot on the edge of the step.
- Bend left knee slightly and let right heel drop towards the ground.
- Unbend left knee to return to starting position and repeat stretch.
- Switch to other side: ball of left foot on edge of the step.
- Bend right knee slightly and let left heel drop towards the ground.
- Unbend right knee to return to starting position and repeat stretch.



