A Simple 6 Step Stretching Routine

This six step – stretch routine will keep you flexible in all your main running muscles. Follow it after every run, or once or twice a week – it depends on how naturally flexible you are.

A few simple rules to remember:

- Do not stretch cold muscles. It is far better to stretch after a run than before
- Do stretch lightly before speedwork, after a 10 minute warm up.
- Ease into each stretch: do not bounce or force it
- Before speedwork, hold each stretch for 10 — 15 seconds
- After a run, hold each stretch for 30 seconds; repeat once or twice on each leg

1. Groin Stretch

Hold your feet and gently use your leg muscles to move your feet towards the ground. Keeping a straight back and bringing your feet closer to your body intensifies the stretch.

2. Gastrocnemius (Upper Calf) stretch)

Keep the back leg straight and push the back heel into the ground. Keeping a straight upper body and gently lifting your hips helps. There should not be much pressure on the front foot.

3. Soleus (Lower Calf) Stretch

Stand closer to the wall and bend one leg, keeping the foot flat on the floor. You should feel a stretch in your lower calf. Leaning towards the wall intensifies the stretch;there should be little pressure on the other foot.

4. Illiotibial Band Stretch.

Place one foot around the other with both feet flat on the ground. Keeping both legs straight, lean your hip towards the side of your rearmost foot (so if your right foot is rearmost, lean your hips to the right). You should feel the stretch down the outside of your leg and around your hip — if you are very stiff, it may take a few times before you feel anything.

5. Hip Flexor Stretch.   Keep your hips squared forwards and your upper body vertical; slumping forwards reduces the stretch.

6. Standing Quadriceps Stretch.

Flex your foot and keep your body straight to maximise the stretch through the front of your leg. You can put one hand on a wall if you need balance.