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Importance of stretching before and after exercise

This may seem like an obvious topic....*but is it?*

How many of us are diligent about stretching pre- and post-exercise? And, of course, as school leaders, we may no longer be in our 20s or 30s; our flexibility and propensity for injury may be going in opposite directions as we age!

Whether you like to run, hike, play pickleball, or golf, do yourself a favour and

S - T - R - E - T - C - H!

According to [Harvard University](#), stretching keeps muscles flexible, strong, and healthy, and helps maintain a range of motion in our joints. Without this range, muscles shorten and become tight. When you call on these muscles for activity, they are then weak and unable to extend, and this can put you at risk for joint pain, strains, and muscle damage.

Stretching Pre- and Post-Exercise

According to the Physical Therapy Zone, if you're not stretching before and after your activity, you are not really taking advantage of a complete exercise routine. For example, pre-exercise stretching increases **flexibility and range of motion**, which loosens your muscles and tendons, and reduces the possibility of injury during your workout.

[Learn more about the advantages of five to ten minutes of stretching](#), both before and after a workout:

Other general benefits of stretching include:

- Relieving the tension built up in our muscles
- Releasing the negative chemicals from pent-up stress
- Maintaining better control over blood pressure
- Avoiding chronic muscle pain
- Keeping the immune system ready for anything

Those with previous injuries or other health concerns need to speak to a physician **before** starting a new stretch routine. Knowing the right stretches and doing them properly is very important, and I recommend investing in a session with a physiotherapist or fitness expert to learn what stretches are best for the activities you love!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Morandini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rochelle Morandini

Member Health & Well-Being, Director

If you would like to contribute or have ideas about what you would like to see in the ReFresh series, we would love to hear from you: contact rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca.