

September, 2021

Paragon Orthopedics Center
Grants Pass, Oregon



LOOSEN UP PEOPLE!

This month, Paragon Orthopedics Center is reminding you that all ages need to pay attention to stretching. Dr. Bents treats injuries of all ages that are the result of having tight muscles and tendons. He wishes more people understood how more flexible body parts resist injuries. This article might be the reminder that saves you a lot of pain and trouble. It will prove to be helpful, no matter what your activity level is.

DYNAMIC STRETCHING. SAY WHAT?

Everyone has heard how important stretching is to prevent muscle injury before you start any activity, from paddle ball, to walking, to cleaning up the garden. Most of us grew up with stretching in one place, which is termed static stretching. There is a new way of preparing for exercise that makes you rethink how you stretch and has many benefits for your long-term muscular health. First, let's define the terms.

Static stretch: Muscles are stretched slowly to tolerance and held in a position of maximal stretch for a defined period of time. These are slow and controlled while you stay in one place.

Dynamic stretch: Muscle are stretched by moving from resting position to maximal stretch and returned to resting position; motion continues for a defined period of time. Your range of motion is gradually increased with controlled movement. Examples are leg swings, arm swings, walking kicks, walking lunges and torso twists. There is absolutely no bouncing with these stretches.

FLEXIBILITY IS THE KEY TO IMPROVEMENT.

Flexibility can be genetic, but it can also be developed. Research is showing that static stretches are not as beneficial for flexibility as we thought. They do not get key muscles as ready as they could be for activity and the gains you obtain from static stretches may not translate into function for your activity. Dynamic stretches have been shown to improve agility, speed, and strength, a triple benefit. More and more, coaches are relying on dynamic stretches to improve athlete performance because these stretches help loosen the key muscles in the specific sport. **DO NOT CONFUSE OVERALL FLEXIBILITY WITH HAVING LESS INJURIES!** Studies show you need flexibility in the *muscles you will use* to prevent injury. The dynamic method of stretching allows you to focus on gradual increases as you reach into the stretch without any jerking movements.

HOW DO I MAKE USE OF THESE?

Before you start any physical activity, it is very important to do a short aerobic warm-up. Think of muscles like pieces of taffy: you can't stretch them unless they are warm. After a few minutes of warming up, go through some dynamic stretches of the movements you will do in your activity. You want to gradually increase your range of motion while doing repetitions. If you are playing tennis, you will rotate your arms to mimic your serve. If you are going for a walk, you would do some forward lunges. Your physician should have some recommendations that are safe for your activity. Reach for the maximum of your range of motion with each repetition, using controlled movement, without bouncing or jerking. Never force the dynamic stretches. Again, use strict and controlled movements. The research differs as to how many repetitions to perform, but the key is to be consistent in your stretching. It is difficult to know how much flexibility you will ultimately gain, but it is sure your gains will be lost once you discontinue the regimen.

After you have completed your exercise, you can benefit from cool down stretches. Here is where **static stretches** are beneficial. Taking a few minutes of solitude to stretch and hold those muscles can loosen the muscles, remove the lactic acid that causes pain, and prevent muscle tissue from healing at a shorter length. Don't let those muscles stay tight after exertion. Please don't hesitate to ask the staff at Paragon Orthopedics about recommended stretches to target your orthopedic issue.

The following articles were referenced for this newsletter:

<http://www.fitday.com/fitness-articles/fitness/stretching/dynamic-stretching-versus-static-stretching.html>

<http://sportsmedicine.about.com/od/flexibilityandstretching/a/Flexibility.htm>

[Layout 1 \(sportsmed.org\)](#)

