

► **Workshop: Walking for Fitness** **Chapter 4, Lesson 1: Preventing Injuries**



This week, we will talk about how to take care of your muscles and protect yourself from injury. Once you have read the lessons, please take the quiz. Successful completion of the quiz will allow you to advance to the next week in the workshop.

The Importance of Stretching

Walking builds strength and stamina. Every day you walk, you are using muscles, tendons and ligaments in your feet, ankles, legs and core. Stretching is important for keeping your body limber, improving your joint range of motion and athletic performance.

Top Ten Reasons to Stretch*

1. Decreases muscle stiffness
2. Increases range of motion.
3. Helps relieve post-exercise aches and pains.
4. Improves posture.
5. Helps reduce or manage stress.
6. Reduces muscular tension and enhances muscular relaxation.
7. Improves mechanical efficiency and overall functional performance.
8. Prepares the body for the stress of exercise.
9. Promotes circulation.
10. Decreases the risk of low-back pain.

*The American Council on Exercise

When Should You Stretch?

Begin your walk with a 5- to 10-minute warm-up. Walk at an easy pace and let your muscles wake up. Pause to stretch any muscles that feel tight before continuing with the rest of your walk. At the end, give yourself time for a 5-minute cool-down and your stretching routine. Stretching after a walk is a great idea since your muscles are already warmed up, allowing you to achieve a deeper stretch.

Next Steps

1. **Read** “Stretches for Walking”
2. **Make stretching** a regular part of your walking routine!
3. **Increase** your step goal this week
4. **Track your steps online** in the Health Trackers section of the Wellness website or use the Walking Log provided in this workshop.
5. **Take the Chapter 4 quiz**

Remember

Stretching is an important part of a healthy and effective workout.