

**THE CHARTERED SOCIETY OF PHYSIOTHERAPY**

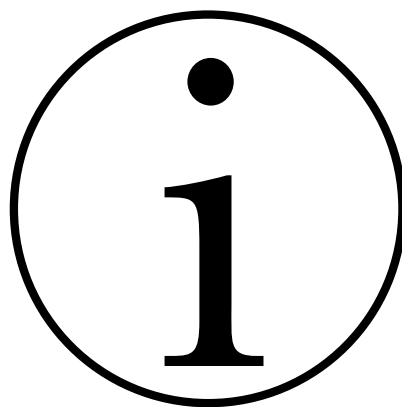
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## **Warm Up To Exercise**

CSP 277

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## Help yourself keep fit for exercise

Are you a gym regular or just starting to work out for a sport? Either way make sure injury doesn't interrupt your fitness routine. Follow the advice of chartered physiotherapists and keep fit for exercise.

- Increase training gradually, don't try to do too much too soon, especially if you are not used to exercise. If you are overweight or unfit, seek advice before starting a fitness routine.
- Over-training and repetitive activities can cause injuries. Pain during or after exercise is a warning sign – don't ignore it.
- Make sure you have a rest day during the week.
- Warming up before you work out and cooling down afterwards are important parts of a fitness routine and can help you avoid injury.

## Warming up for exercise

**By warming up before exercise you increase blood flow to muscles and other soft tissues, an important factor in avoiding damage to ligaments, muscles and tendons, including sprains and strains – common sports injuries.** Your routine should include cardiovascular exercises to increase your heart rate gradually and stretches to prepare muscles and increase flexibility.

- Start with five to 10 minutes of a light activity - fast walking, slow jogging on the spot or skipping. This should raise your body temperature and increase your heart rate and bring you out in a slight sweat.
- Then try stretches to prepare muscles in your arms, legs and back. Stretching should be a gentle movement – don't try to force the stretch by bouncing or over reaching. These movements should not cause pain. See below for details of basic stretches.

## Cooling down

Cooling down helps your body return to normal and should also prevent next day muscle stiffness. Try marching on the spot, for about five to 10 minutes gradually decreasing effort until your heart rate returns to resting level. Then repeat the stretches you did when warming up. You should find you can go further!

## How to deal with injuries

Many minor sports injuries can be self-treated and won't interrupt your fitness routine for long. If you have immediate swelling or are unsure about the nature of your injury you should seek medical attention.

### Self-treatment advice

- Take a break from exercise for 72 hours to protect your injury. Complete rest is unnecessary but avoid any activity that causes pain.
- Apply an ice pack to the injury as soon as possible. Frozen vegetables make a good substitute. Make sure you protect your skin by wrapping the ice pack in a damp towel or cloth. Apply for about 20-30 minutes, 10 minutes if applying to a bony area like an ankle. Repeat every two hours.
- Try to keep the injured limb raised above the level of your heart, when possible. This should help reduce swelling.
- Applying compression can also reduce swelling. Use a stretchy bandage, don't wrap it too tightly and remove the bandage at night.

- You may want to take an anti-inflammatory drug to help with pain and swelling, ask your pharmacist for advice about what to take. But if the pain continues for more than three days or if you do not notice any significant improvement to the injury after 72 hours, seek advice from a doctor or a chartered physiotherapist.

## Choosing a chartered physiotherapist

**When choosing a physiotherapist make sure they have at least one of the following sets of initials after their name:**

- MCSP Member of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
- SRP State Registered Physiotherapist

This will guarantee that they are properly qualified and governed by a professional code of conduct.

### **For further information contact:**

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy  
14 Bedford Row  
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## Stretches for your warm-up and cool down routines

Stretching should not be painful, don't force the stretch or bounce to increase the stretch. Do not hold your breath when stretching. If any of the exercises causes pain, stop immediately and seek medical advice.

Due to individual differences, not everyone should expect to attain the positions shown in the photographs. Ease gently towards the position, without pain. Repeat each stretch four times.

### **Calf stretch**

Stand with one foot forwards, knee bent. Your back knee should be straight and facing forwards. Lean forward over your bent knee without bending at the waist, keeping the back knee straight and your heel on the floor. You should feel a gentle pull in the calf of the back leg. Hold for a count of 15. Repeat to the other side.

### **Hamstring stretch**

Lie on your back with one knee bent. With both hands support the back of your thigh. Straighten your knee until you feel a gentle stretch at the back of your thigh. As you straighten your leg, make sure your back is flat on the floor and your chin is tucked into your neck. Hold for a count of 15. Repeat to the other side.

### **Quadriceps and knee stretch**

Stand and hold one foot behind you bringing it up towards your bottom until you feel a gentle stretch. Support your ankle with your hand or a towel as you hold the stretch. Make sure the knee of the other leg is slightly bent. Do not lean forward or allow your back to arch. Hold for a count of 15. Repeat to the other side.

### **Chest stretch**

Stretch your arms behind you, turning your palms to face out and keeping your elbows straight. Hold for a count of 15.

## **Hip stretch**

Sit with one leg stretched out in front of you. Cross the other leg over it. Using one arm for support turn the upper body towards the bent knee. Place the opposite hand on the outside of the bent knee and continue gently moving towards your bent knee until you feel the stretch. Hold for a count of 15. Repeat to the other side.

## **Arm stretch**

Raise your arm, bending your elbow behind your head with your hand behind your neck. With your other hand gently pull your elbow towards the opposite side. Keep your elbow bent and behind your head. Don't push your head forward. Hold for a count of 10. Repeat to the other side.

Sponsored by Nurofen.

This leaflet was produced with the support of the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Sports Medicine.

### **THE CHARTERED SOCIETY OF PHYSIOTHERAPY**

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy is the professional, educational and trade union body for the United Kingdom's 35,000 chartered physiotherapists, physiotherapy students and assistants.